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HISTORY OF THE STAGE.

THE FRENCH STAGE.

[Continued from page 274.]

EVERY attempt to injure the reputation of the Cid served to increase its attractions and extend its fame; and Corneille had the triumphant satisfaction to see the cardinal derided and his creatures despised for their injurious attacks upon his work. An objection to a certain passage in the Cid occasioned as much critical controversy as the "*Put out the light*" and "*THEN, put out the light*" of our Shakspeare. The passage is "*A tu du cœur?*" The objection to which was, that as it was simply "*Have you courage?*" it was an unfit question to be put to a valiant champion such as Rodrigue, and indeed, were that the meaning of the sentence, would be inapplicable to the circumstance on which it is introduced. On the other hand, it was alleged, that the academy purposely altered the passage from "*a tu un cœur?*" which was written by Corneille, and which meant "*Have you a heart—have you nature—have you filial affections—have you laudable family pride, and courage to revenge your father's wrongs by destroying the father of her you love?*"

In a word, there was no mode of attack which malice could wish, or cunning could devise, that was not put in practice. Shakspeare himself never was more venomously and wantonly assailed than was the Cid, by the enemies of Corneille. It was represented as in some parts inflated, in some immoral, and in most jejune, dull, puerile and uninteresting. The great Racine himself, in this one case at least, descending from the lofty preeminence of his talents, did not disdain to share in this little dirty work of detraction; having in a play of his, called "*Les Plaideurs*," travestied, even to caricature, some beautiful passages of the Cid. This, being done by a young man of real genius, seems more than any other to have been resented by Corneille, who, on reading it, exclaimed "What! shall a youngster be allowed thus to ridicule one's best poetry?"

But all was ineffectual. The sarcasms, the criticisms, the ridicule and the invenomed satire of all the praters and writers, "fell to cureless ruin;" and his enemies had the mortification to find, that nothing could injure Corneille's fame, so strongly was it built, and so deeply was it founded in public opinion. The triumph of the Cid over the cardinal and the academy was decisive; and in the plaudits of the public voice, the feeble snarling of the curs of envy, was most completely and for ever buried. Despreaux has recorded this in the following lines:

En vain contre le Cid un ministre se ligue,
Tout Paris pour chimene, a les yeux DE RODRIGUE;
L'Academie en corps a beau le censurer;
Le public revolte s'obstine a l'admirer.

Though thus repulsed and defeated, the cardinal felt neither shame nor remorse; but lending the ear rather to the suggestions of his heart than to the dictates of plain sense, he still hugged the hope that Corneille would bring forth some other work which would enable the academy to crush him, or at least to lower his fame, and his pride. In this, however, his eminence, and all who wished as he did, were completely disappointed: for ere yet the growl of discontent had died away, and while yet the haunts of literature reechoed with the praises of the Cid, Corneille brought out his HORACE [*Horatius*]. Immediately the academy were put in motion by the cardinal, and sat in judgment on the play with no less appetite than before to indulge their patron, and injure Corneille: but they could make nothing of it: the world saw into their baseness, despised their motives, and derided their puny attempts. The

academy, however, persevered in fulminating their censures, greatly to the advantage of Corneille: for the more rancorous and calumnious that body was, the more resolute and active were all other men to defend and do him justice. On this occasion Corneille elegantly remarked that it was but just his piece should meet the same fate as the person who was the subject of it: "Horatius," added he, "was condemned by the duumvirs, but absolved by the people."

The fecundity of Corneille's muse, considering the very superior excellence of her productions, is perfectly marvellous: for while yet the public were loud in their applause of the *Horace*, nay, while they were hot in pursuit of it, he brought out his tragedy of *CINNA*, which many think the best of all his productions. In truth, any reader of taste will find it difficult to confess that there exists to this day, in the French language, any drama superior to it. The cold sentence of the closet critic on a dramatic production, though no doubt intitled to its share of consideration, vanishes when opposed to the decision of the heart and public feelings on its representation. Of the extraordinary effect of the *Cinna*, two instances are mentioned, which would be sufficient to confirm its claim to immortality; and those have been recorded only because they related to the very highest and most illustrious personages; but it is fair to conclude, that there were multitudes who were as feelingly interested, and, if they had been exposed at the time to similar circumstances, would have shown it as openly as those great personages did. One of them was Lewis the Fourteenth—the other, the great CONDE.

The chevalier De Rohan was lying under sentence of death for conspiring against the state, and Lewis had obstinately resisted every application made in his behalf,—nay, refused to listen to the solicitations of the most powerful persons, or even of those who were most important to his concerns, and most dear to his heart. The night preceding the day appointed for the chevalier's execution, the king went to the representation of *CINNA*, and was so forcibly struck by many of the passages, and particularly by that speech of Augustus in the fifth act, in which he so eloquently congratulates himself on having obtained a conquest over his passions, that though, from pride, or some other consideration, he refrained from voluntarily issuing an immediate revocation of the sentence, he afterwards frequently declared, that if at that moment

he had been solicited to save the life of De Rohan, he could not have refused to do it.

The other instance is that of the great Condé who, at the age of twenty years, was so deeply affected by the *Cinna* that he wept heartily in spite of him. This being related to Lewis, struck him as a most fortunate prognostic, and a certain presage of that prince's future good conduct and greatness.

The next year (1640) the muse of Corneille had another child named *POLIEUCTE*, which had like to have perished in the birth. The history of this piece is singular. Corneille sent it to the theatre to be perused and approved by the actors. Though it holds equal rank with the *Cinna* in the opinions of a large portion of the critical world, and by not a few is deemed superior, the actors thought it not worth performing, and refused it. It happened that one of them, who was intrusted by the rest to return it to Corneille, took it into his head to take another loose glance at it as he walked up and down his chamber; and meeting a passage in it which to his over-delicate taste was so offensive and so greatly discomposed his temper that he dashed it out of his hand, throwing it in such a direction that, by mere accident, it fell upon the tester of his bed, and he thought no more of it—or at least he did not think it worth his while to give himself any further trouble about it, and there left it. For a considerable time no one knew what had become of poor *Polieucte*, till about eighteen months after, when an upholsterer, being employed to take down the bed, found the manuscript, and thus rescued one of the most beautiful productions of the human mind from oblivion.

Corneille, being in his heart persuaded that the play was deserving of a very different fate from that which the actors assigned to it, and from which it had so miraculously escaped, resolved to press forward the representation of it; and, to that end, read the piece to a body which then constituted the most learned, ingenious, and liberal tribunal over all literary controversies existing in France, and which met at the hotel de Rambouillet. Out of regard to the feelings of a person whose exalted merit deserved the greatest respect, the members applauded the piece in the presence of Corneille; but on his departure, committed it in charge to M. de Voiture to inform Corneille, in the most delicate manner possible, that *Polieucte* was not viewed by that body with that encouraging warmth that might be expected; and that there were some passages in it, those espe-

cially which touched upon religion, that displeased them. Coming forth under such unpromising auspices, who could have imagined that this production, thus censured for its freedom with religion, was to be the play which would first open the eyes of the French public to the respectability of dramatic entertainments, CONSIDERED IN A MORAL LIGHT; and thus rejected by the actors, was to be that which, by occasioning players to be viewed with a respect and consideration they never experienced before, would induce them to deserve it by a complete amendment of their moral conduct.

Upon the discouraging representation of *Voiture*, the modesty of Corneille impelled him to withdraw his piece from the stage; but he was at length prevailed upon to leave it in the hands of the actors; with strict injunctions however on his part, and a promise on that of one of the performers, that it should not be acted. Whether they were privately instigated by some friend of Corneille's of superior judgment to the rest, or imagined it would be beneficial to the theatre, and, whatever he might pretend, pleasing to him, the actors fortunately violated their promise, and *Polieucte* was performed in public.

That night made an era in the art of acting in France.—In *Polieucte* there is a scene touching religion, the awfulness of which struck the principal performer with a persuasion that it demanded a solemnity in the execution not practised on the stage, and indeed that it required a total departure from the usual extravagance and frivolity of scenic representation. It is in the fourth act. SEVERUS being smitten with the conviction of the unity of God, makes known to FABIAN his doubts respecting the polytheistical tenets of the pagans. In conveying these sentiments, BELLEROSE, a celebrated actor, who performed the part of Severus, had the ingenuity and the discretion to depart from his accustomed mode of action and delivery; and instead of it assumed such an air and tone of simple solemnity, so natural a demeanor, and such good sense, that the people who, in all their lives before, had never seen any thing but almost frantic extravagance and unnatural bombast, were struck with wonder and delight, and, for the first time, found their eyes opened to the true delineation of nature on the stage. Out of respect to religion, Bellerose was averse to the introduction in any way of a subject so sacred on the mimic scene: but it being determined to act the play, he undertook the part with emotions of reverential awe, and exerted himself to make it as solemn and impressive as

possible. The play was in consequence greatly admired. The public approbation of the sentiments it contained was extended to the actors, who were from that time treated with a respect which had never before belonged to them; and were so raised in estimation that the next year the following *arret* was made in their favour.

“ In case the said comedians regulate the action of their performances so as to be entirely free from impurity, we will that their exhibitions,—as by this means they will innocently amuse the public,—be considered as void of blame and reproach; and also, that their occupation shall not be pleaded as an impediment to the exercise of business, or connexion in public commerce.” From which *arret* it appears, that the members of that profession had before laboured under very severe disqualifications.

One would imagine that the composing of three such tragedies as *Horace*, *Cinna* and *Polieucte*, within two years, would have exhausted any mind, however affluent; and yet early in the next year (1641) we find Corneille producing another tragedy, *Pompey*, not at all inferior to the other three.

As it is impossible to speak of Corneille fairly, without being tempted to speak in censure of Richelieu, we will separate the subjects as soon as we can, and get rid of the cardinal with the best grace possible, by stating, that in the year 1642, in the course of which our poet brought out his best comedy, *Le Menteur*, his eminence went to another, and we hope a better, world, precisely at that crisis when the fame of the object of his hatred had reached its meridian.

The character of this extraordinary man may have its use: it may serve to mortify the pride of rank and power, and warn men against the pernicious fatuity of grasping at objects which nature and circumstances have placed out of their reach. In his instance, the pitiful ambition of excelling in poetry not only misled the cardinal's understanding, but corrupted his heart. So voracious was his appetite for fame as well as power, that while he thought nothing above his attainment, there were few things too low for his emulation; and the end being once proposed, he seemed no ways scrupulous about the means. To Richelieu the character which queen Catherine, in Shakspeare's *Henry the Eighth*, gives of cardinal Wolsey, is in many points applicable—

Yet thus far, Griffith, give me leave to speak of him,
And yet with charity;—he was a man

Of an unbounded stomach, ever ranking
Himself with princes; one that, by suggestion,
Tied all the kingdom: simony was fair play;
His own opinion was his law; i' the presence
He would say untruths; and be ever double
Both in his words and meaning. He was never,
But where he meant to ruin, pitiful;—
His promises were,—as he then was,—mighty;
But his performance,—as he is now,—nothing.

So omnivorous was Richelieu's vanity that, while he completely governed France, was scourging the house of Austria, and ruling the politics of Europe at will, and to that end employed himself in promoting mischief and exciting national commotions, the same exorbitant restlessness and turbulence of passion extended itself to the theatre, the academy, and every establishment in France connected with poetry and literature, and inflamed them also to intestine commotions. Though without any reasonable pretensions to emulation with Corneille, he set up as his rival, and was thrown into greater trepidation by the *Cid* than he would have been if the hostile military powers of Europe, and the malcontents of France, were armed at the gates of Paris. What a load of misery must this man have brought down upon himself by this perverted ambition, if it be true, as no doubt it is, what Fontenelle says, that, after the *Cid*, "Corneille became more elevated in Horace,—still more in *Cinna*,—and still more in *Polieucte*,—beyond which nothing could "reach?" Yet as it is ordained that every evil shall have its concomitant good, this preposterous passion of the cardinal, while it degraded him, advanced the drama. Every writer, who had talents sufficient to flatter himself that he had more, fell to work with earnestness, if not to reach the goal of fame, at least to obtain the cardinal's patronage and good will, while those who were most eminent for talents strained every nerve in emulation of each other: the consequence of which was, that the drama and the French stage were, during his eminence's time, raised to the greatest elevation they ever attained.

As to Corneille himself, whatever mortification his feelings may have endured, his productions were no doubt benefited and his fame enhanced by the cardinal's malicious efforts to injure them. For it is the nature of all men, except the very worst, to favour those who are the innocent objects of oppression: yet no sooner was the cardinal taken off than Corneille's muse assumed a higher station;

from being indebted to favour, she now commanded, and left all rivals panting behind and "toiling after her in vain;" the four tragedies, so praised by Fontenelle, occupying the theatre almost exclusively. Though his comedy of the *Menteur* had considerable success, the public still admired his tragedies more. They sipped of the former—but they drank deep of the latter: yet, tempted by the approbation which his *Thalia* received, he wrote a sequel to the *Menteur*, borrowed, as that also was, from the exhaustless stores of Lope de Vega. This was intitled *Suite du Menteur*, and met with what other writers would consider success, and had still more when, after being laid for many years on the shelf, it was revived. But the taste of France for comedy had not yet arrived at perfection; and the applause which Corneille's comic pieces received was so much inferior to that which had been lavished on his tragedy, and to what he had been accustomed to, that he very wisely resolved to take leave of "the luring jade, *Thalia*," notwithstanding her bewitching smiles, and to attach himself with unshaken fidelity to her *sombre* sister: to do greater honour to whom, in his next offering, he lay by for some time, and in the year 1646, produced his tragedy of *RODOGUNE*, which immediately received the stamp of public approbation.

Of all his plays, *Rodogune* is that which Corneille himself most approved. After avowing this, he says: "This preference is perhaps in me the effect of that blind partiality which parents sometimes entertain for one child rather than another; perhaps it may be tainted with a little self-love, because this tragedy is more properly my own than any thing that has preceded it, on account of the incidents being new, original, invented, and such as never before had been exhibited in a theatre; and if this reason should be just, it establishes a fact which confirms the propriety of my partiality."

Corneille's pieces, subsequent to *Rodogune*, began to be received with less warmth; not that his general fame grew less, but because, for reasons which will appear, each particular piece seemed inferior to his former works. In 1646, he produced *Theodore*, a tragedy, which had very little success, considered as a work of Corneille's. In 1647, he brought out *Heraclius*: this was greatly admired by the judicious, but was not sufficiently understood by the multitude.—Why this coldness to his pieces took place it is not a little curious to contemplate.

From what has been related of Richelieu, one would think that, he being gone, Corneille would be little likely to have any thing to do with cardinals again, since, for one man, he had more than his share of them: but, as if it had been decreed by fate that he should be the sport of their eminences, he had hardly got from out of the fangs of Richelieu, when he was pounced upon by Mazarine, who, as well as Richelieu, was a cardinal and a prime minister.

It seems that when Corneille was on the point of bringing out his *Cinna*, he, in order to mortify Richelieu, proposed to dedicate it to Mazarine; but having reason, from indications he received on the subject, to be assured that his dedication would be churlishly received, and that no return would be made to him for that mark of respect, he changed his mind, and addressed it to Monsieur Montauron, a gentleman who had the ambition to be thought a patron and protector of poets and men of letters, and from whom he, in return, received a gift of one thousand pistoles. This splendid douceur was construed by both the cardinals into an insult, and by the world was considered as a very just and well merited satire on their eminences. This was not a circumstance well calculated to improve the interest of Corneille with either of them; so that on the death of Richelieu, and the accession to ministerial power of Mazarine, Corneille found that seat, from which one enemy had dropped, filled with another. On the other hand, Mazarine, who knew how much his predecessor was indebted for his celebrity to corrupt poets and to actors, resolved to try his luck, and by encouraging musicians, composers and singers, instead of players, to procure for himself a new sort of notoriety. From this we are to date the origin of the opera in France: and to this new taste may chiefly be ascribed the decline which took place in the long established attractiveness of Corneille's pieces.

Yet it would be wrong to dismiss these productions without inquiring into the reality of their claims. *Theodore* certainly deserved a much better reception than it met with. The public had now become tired of such pieces; and the tragedy of *Heraclius*, which followed it, was considered as a strange, eccentric production. The truth is, that the poet was, by the success of his *Rodogune* operating in confirmation of his own opinion, so vastly enamoured with its originality, that he determined to be still more original in *Heraclius*; and in his efforts to be so, he degenerated into obscu-

rity, which gave occasion to the witty abbe Pelegrin to call Heraclius *the despair of all tragic authors*, and to the arch Despreau to nickname it the *logogriphe*, or enigma. Yet was Corneille much in conceit with this play. "This tragedy," says he, "is more an effort of invention than Rodogune; and I may venture to say that "it is a happy original, of which there will be many copies." And then he makes open confession of its obscurity, explains the nature of the incidents, shows how they are connected and interwoven, and points out the difficulty and intricacy in which they are involved, and in the end says that they cannot be comprehended but by reflection after the conclusion of the piece,—and that, perhaps, they cannot be enjoyed with perfect taste till after the representation of them has been witnessed a second time.

Since perspicuity is one of the most necessary ingredients in a dramatic production, at least in representation, it is no wonder that a piece which the author of it himself describes as so very incomprehensible, should have given a handle to the enemies of Corneille to object to it and throw it into derision. Yet the unpopularity of Heraclius was not altogether the fault of Corneille, but arose from the taste of the times, which began to waver and to go over to the opera, now set on foot by the agency of Mazarine.

It was in the year 1647 that cardinal Mazarine established THE OPERA, the splendor, the scenery, machinery, decorations, mummery, dancing, music, and novelty of which rendered it at once so popular among that capricious versatile people that the valuable dramatic entertainments were totally neglected; and in the overbearing tide of abominable taste Corneille himself was borne away along with the rest. But after three years total rejection from the stage, he thought it prudent to conform to the fashion of the times, and in 1650 his *Andromede* came forth to the public, with all the stupid pomp and priggish foppery of the Italian opera.

(To be continued.)

BIOGRAPHY.*

MEMOIRS OF MRS. MATTOCKS.

When HALLAM fills the tragic scene,
 Displaying tender Juliet's mien,
 The tearful glances of her eyes
 Attract a hundred Romeos' sighs;
 Nay, if you'll take a critic's word,
 I've often wish'd "I were her bird."
 But when the rosy-laughing hours
 Fly swift before her comic powers,
 With face and figure form'd to please,
 With spirit, elegance, and ease,
 I envy Juliet's bird no more,
 For BELL's the goddess I adore.

Poetry of those Times.

To those who, deeming dramatic entertainments as important and beneficial to society, consider the establishment of a theatre in this country a fortunate event, nothing so nearly and dearly connected with the father of the American stage as the subject of this memoir can be uninteresting: more particularly as Mrs. Mattocks, in addition to the circumstance of her being the sister of the late Mr. Hallam, was in almost every article of her life, private as well as public, one of the most estimable as well as admirable of her profession.

This illustrious actress and excellent woman, whose maiden name was Isabella Hallam, was born in Goodman's-fields, in the year 1746. Her uncle, William Hallam, was manager of the theatre in that place, during one, or perhaps more, of the secessions of Mr. Giffard. Her father was also an actor at the same theatre at the time when Mr. Garrick was there. He is said to have been much admired in low comedy; but was, probably, impelled, by the misfortunes that attended the company after Garrick left it, to seek an asylum in America.

Dramatic performances were, at that time, a great novelty to the American people: therefore it is no wonder that, soon after his

* The continuation of Mr. WARREN's life is unavoidably postponed to the next number.

arrival, he became manager of the theatres of Charleston, New-York, and Philadelphia.* His success in these pursuits is said to have been such as to enable him to realize a fortune of 10,000*l.*, the whole of which was lost in the American war.

Miss Hallam, at the departure of her father, was left under the protection of Mrs. Barrington, her aunt, an actress of very considerable merit at Covent-garden theatre, who procured for her one of the most finished educations at that time known; of which she seems in a very conspicuous manner to have availed herself.

The first appearance of Miss Hallam upon the stage was at so very early a period of her life as the age of four years and a half, in the character of the Parish Girl, in the "*What d'ye call it*," a tragic comic poetical farce, written by Gay.† It happened that the dutchess of Bolton (the famous Polly Peachum) was present at the performance, and, charmed with the infant actress, sent her five guineas, accompanied with a polite card, expressing her approbation, and intimating a wish that the little Parish Girl of that evening might be as successful through life as she had been.‡

It has been justly said by Cibber, that there is something so fascinating to the juvenile mind in the characters of heroes and heroines, that it is little to be wondered why all the candidates for theatric fame are anxious to attract the town to the pomp and circumstance of sublime tragedy, and to seize on the tender passions of their audiences, in a part where they are most assailable, by exhibiting themselves in circumstances of exquisite distress, and, by a display of their tragic powers, giving them

* The first dramatic representation in the then colonies of America was performed in Philadelphia, by a small company from England, under the management of Mr. Douglas, father-in-law of Mr. Hallam, of the New York theatre, and of our favourite, Mrs. Mattocks. Some years before the revolutionary war, Douglas had erected a regular theatre in Philadelphia; but that event drove him to seek his fortune in the West Indian islands.—JANSEN'S STRANGER IN AMERICA.

† In ridicule of the tragedies of those times, particularly of *Venice Preserved*.

‡ The Parish Girl is said to have been the first part in which the celebrated Lavinia Fenton appeared at the little theatre in the Haymarket. When Miss Hallam undertook it, she is said to have been in figure so diminutive, considering the size of the stage, that a gentleman in the pit exclaimed, "I can hear the little charmer very well, but it is impossible to see her without a magnifying glass."

a *full dose* of the *doleful*, while in situations where, as Murphy observes,

Young gentlefolks are apt to fall;

though of this, with respect to Miss Hallam, there was no danger. Prepared by an excellent education, and inspired by a true dramatic genius, she seemed, according to the opinion of the critics, born at once to attract and to fix the attention of the town. Under these happy auspices, and with this promising prospect, at the age of fifteen, she commenced tragic actress, and began, at Covent-garden, her theatrical career, in the arduous part of Juliet. We think her aunt, Mrs. Barrington, performed Lady Capulet, and, consequently, introduced the young *debutante* upon the stage.

The good nature of a metropolitan audience always secures a favourable reception to a lovely girl in so interesting a situation; but of this indulgence Miss Hallam had, in the course of the evening, little occasion to avail herself: she performed the difficult part intrusted to her in a manner that would have done credit to the most experienced actress, and, consequently, elicited concomitant applause.

The manager was too wise to suffer the genius of this young favourite to lie dormant; he, on the contrary, promoted its expansion in the various classes of the drama, tragic, comic, and operatic; though we must observe, that the two latter seem, by her having resigned the former, to have been, of late years, considered by herself as peculiarly her *forte*. Perhaps the observation which Dr. Johnson makes with respect to Shakspeare, as a writer, will, in some degree, apply to Mrs. Mattocks as an actress:—"Her tragedy, excellent as it was, seemed to be ART; her comedy to be "NATURE."

In the *operas*, she was, as an actress, so much superior to Miss Brent, that we have always entertained an idea that she was a much better singer, at least when she followed her in the same parts—Polly, in the Beggar's Opera; Rosetta, in Love in a Village; Patty, in the Maid of the Mill, &c.: for instance, she was a hundred times more fascinating, as the feelings of the audience, except that part of it termed *connoisseurs*, who seldom have any feelings at all, fully evinced.

At different periods, Miss Hallam performed in Artaxerxes the three important characters, Artaxerxes, Mandane, and Arbaces.

In the part of Polly, she was so truly excellent, that Mr. Rich observed, Gay might burst the cerement of his sepulchre to hear her.

Her performance of Bertha, in *The Royal Merchant*; or, *The Beggar's Bush*, was distinguished by a circumstance which showed her taste and judgment. The scene of this piece is in Flanders: Bertha appears as the niece to Vandunk, the governor of Bruges, a character which she dressed exactly in the style of Reuben's wife (Helena Forman), as she appears in a celebrated picture by that artist.

The Flemish female costume, though common in England during the reigns of the Stuarts, was, at this period, entirely unknown on the English stage; therefore the effect of the revival of the Vandyke dress, as it is termed, by the ladies, who have since adopted it, may be better conceived than it can be described.

In the part of Diana, the Florentine maiden, in the comedy of *All's Well that Ends Well*, we recollect that the simplicity yet peculiar smartness of the dress of Miss Hallam was loudly applauded on her first entrance; while the excellence of her acting contributed to keep the audience in good humour during the exhibition of a piece which was performed under very trying circumstances, it being the first after the opening of the theatre, which had been shut several days, in order to repair the devastation occasioned by the almost insane outrages of a set of *well dressed savages*, in February, 1763.

In the season of 1764, was produced a very singular species of entertainment, intended to ridicule the operatic taste then too prevalent: this was the *English burletta* of *Midas*,* in which Miss Hallam performed the part of Nysa, and, by her exquisite humour, greatly contributed to exalt the piece to that height of celebrity which it afterwards so justly attained. Counsellor C——, a gentleman whose genius, erudition, and talents, as a lawyer, would have borne him to the very *acme* of his profession, had not his unfortunate speculations in the *new* buildings, Dean's-yard, Westminster, depressed his spirits and paralysed his exertions, was so charmed

* This was played as a first piece, it being then in three acts: it was afterwards reduced to two, and derived, in our opinions, much advantage from compression.

with the performance of Miss Hallam, that he always called her "his little Nysa."*

We now resume our memoir, from the regular thread of which we have a little digressed, and open this part of it with a dramatic piece, intituled, "*The Trip to Scotland*," which, in the year 1765,

* His son, it appears, followed his example; for when he was a boy at Westminster school, as Mrs. Mattocks, from the intimacy that prevailed in their families, knew that the young gentlemen were much in the habit of making feasts after they had retired to their rooms for the night, she sent to Master C. a large Norfolk turkey, and an enormous chain of sausages, as a *petit soupè*, or nocturnal *bonne bouche*; in consequence of which she, the next day, received from him the following verses, of the merit of which, considering the age of the poet, we think so highly that we gladly avail ourselves of the present opportunity to insert them.

VERSES,

Written by S— C—, Esq. when he was a youth of fourteen years of age, in return for a Norfolk turkey and sausages, sent by Mrs. Mattocks to him when at Westminster School.

The goddesses once, as the old poets tells us,
Took delight in intriguing with us pretty fellows.
To make matters easy, Jove always conferr'd
On each, as a courier, her favourite bird.
When the peacock was seen, with his plumage erected,
A message from Juno was surely expected.
When Venus would write to her lover Anchises,
By the dove she despatch'd her celestial advices.
Nay, Pallas (though reckon'd too sober for flirting)
Was sure of a nodding grave owl at her curtain;
'Twas whisper'd, however, that *she* had her spark,
Else why should her messenger fly in the dark?
Be it known, that of late an intrigue is begun
Betwixt me and dear Nysa, the goddess of fun;
And Nysa, lest mortals should think her absurd,
Has follow'd the fashion, and sent me her bird.
'Tis true that she sent nor owl, peacock, nor dove,
But her turkey has taught me the language of love.
The messenger came, and my fancy did hit,
Not sparkling with plumage, but truss'd for the spit:
On each side did the gizzard and liver appear,
And a link of fine sausages brought up the rear.
O follow, dear goddess! this excellent rule,
(I learn'd it from Horace this morning at school)
That love, without eating and drinking, grows cool.
So whene'er at a school-boy you level your dart,
The way through the stomach's the way to the heart.

was performed by Mr. George Mattocks and Miss Hallam, both of the theatre royal, Covent-garden, for *their own* benefit. The wags, upon this occasion, said, that *Apollo* had shown his taste in running away with *Nysa*, instead of pursuing *Daphne*.

Mr. Mattocks, with a very handsome person, possessed also an excellent voice; he played the principal characters in all the English operas, which formed a species of dramatic amusement that had a prodigious run in those times: he was, therefore, deservedly a favourite of the public.

This young couple, the year after their marriage, were engaged at the Liverpool theatre, which was then under the management of Mr. Gibson, an actor whom, in many of his characters, *Gloster*, in *King Lear*, for instance, we thought excellent; though he was said to retain more the manner of the *old school* than any one at that time on the stage. But it was not merely on the stage that he displayed his excellence: his integrity in private life was firmly established; his benevolence, in proportion to his means, was extensive; consequently he was extremely loved and esteemed.

Mrs. Mattocks, at this time not more than one-and-twenty, was most admirably calculated to become the favourite of a town at once *commercial* and *critical*. Animated, elegant, and fascinating, her histrionic and vocal powers were soon drawn forth in tragedy, comedy, opera, and farce. She acted better than any one that had ever been seen there. She sung enchantingly, and, consequently, her success was unbounded.

The metropolitan fashions had not, at this period, taken such rapid strides from the center to the extremities of the island, as they have been used to do in more modern times; therefore the various dresses of Mrs. Mattocks, after they had passed the *ordal* of the female critics in the theatre, and been there displayed to the admiration of every one, were frequently sent for by the principal ladies of Liverpool, for paraphernalian patterns; and so much was she the object of attraction that, in her evening walks, she was surrounded with admirers; so it may easily be believed that the fame of this London phenomenon soon expanded, till it reached Manchester, where she was solicited to sing once a week at the concert, which was performed every Thursday evening.

For these vocal exertions her agreement was ten guineas per night and a clear benefit. This sum was, by the lower order of the people at Manchester, thought so enormous, *at that time*, for

merely singing a few songs, that the market-place, which faced the inn where she resided, used to be crowded with spectators, who waited to gape and stare at "th' woman that did get ten guineas a noight for zinging of zongs."

Mr. Gibson died at Liverpool, about the year 1771, very generally lamented. He left his property, in which was included a patent for the theatre, to a lady of the name of Bennet, whom we remember at Covent-garden theatre an actress of some eminence, in the characters of antiquated abigails and modern chambermaids, Patch, Foible, Inis, also Lady Loverule, &c., where she was a kind of co-rival to Mrs. Pitt.

A new theatre had, before the death of Mr. Gibson, been built at Liverpool, of which it appeared that many speculators wished to purchase the lease and patent, and, in consequence, made various applications to Mrs. Bennet for this purpose; but to these she with great propriety replied, "That all Mr. Gibson had possessed had been derived from the inhabitants of Liverpool; that to them she felt the highest sense of obligation for the ease and comfort which attended her declining years; therefore, she would never part with the patent to any one that would not promise to engage Mrs. Mattocks to perform, as she knew that it would be an article in the agreement more acceptable to the town than any other which she had the power to stipulate."

In consequence of this determination of Mrs. Bennet, Mr. Mattocks and Mr. Younger purchased the patent betwixt them.

This accession of her husband, to the joint management of the theatre, gave to Mrs. Mattocks her choice and full range of parts: her situation, it is probable, produced a still greater expansion of her genius, for we know that her success was unbounded. But it was not only on the stage that she shone with unrivalled lustre; her strong understanding, her talents, and the elegance of her manners, endeared her to a large circle of polished society, by whom she was equally loved and esteemed.

Under these happy auspices, it is natural to imagine that the doors of Fortune's temple were thrown open to her, and that, secure from future storms, she had only to enter, and enjoy the happiness which seemed to court her acceptance. Yet how soon was the cup of prosperity dashed from her lips! The patent, which she had fondly, and indeed rationally, hoped would have been the

foundation of her highest prosperity, proved the source of her deepest adversity. She does not know the reason of this.* We do! at least we will endeavour to launch a conjecture which, we think, will come near the truth, viz. that Mr. Mattocks was a much better actor than a manager, as we have understood that in the latter character he suffered his good nature to be imposed on, and his credulity to be turned to the advantage of those who understood that part of business better than himself. It was impossible that the inhabitants of the town of Liverpool, liberal in their ideas and critical in their judgment, could have taken any dislike to the company enumerated in the note; therefore it is fair to suppose, that their disgust to the theatre arose from a source with which neither her husband nor herself were acquainted. Be this as it may, the ill consequences fixed upon them. In the wreck of the theatre they lost all, even to the tea-spoon and the towel.

Mr. Mattocks was, of course, declared a bankrupt; and the severest trial of his life is said to have been that awful moment, when he was compelled to take from his beloved wife her watch and diamonds, which he laid on the table before the commissioners, who unanimously insisted upon his immediately returning them to his pocket, and, in every other instance, treated him with that humanity and good breeding which are concomitant to the English mercantile character.

Through the whole of this distressful scene, Mrs. Mattocks supported herself with the greatest fortitude; but, as it too frequently happens, where the spirits are highly strained to meet the exigency of circumstances, as soon as her fears for the personal safety of her husband had subsided, a reverse took place which sunk them to despondency.

It has been said, that when Mrs. Mattocks had discharged all the

* We make this assertion, because, writing to a friend, she says,—“What I fondly hoped would have been the foundation of my fortune has proved its ruin: why or wherefore, I cannot tell, but the public was dissatisfied with the company that was brought down; though I think you will wonder at it when I tell you that, at the same time, they have had Wroughton, Quick, Lee Lewis, Henderson, Mrs. Crouch, Mrs. S. Kemble, myself, Mr. Kemble, and Mrs. Siddons, (§) and many more, that were deserving of commendation, have acted for a whole season together.”

(§) Perhaps such a company as this was never before seen out of the metropolis, and, indeed, very seldom within it.

expenses attendant upon their distressed situation, they were left with only one *half crown* in the world. Let us see how our heroine behaved in these trying circumstances. She showed the half-crown to her husband, kissed it, and said, "My dear George, we are still rich, for this is *our own*, and no one can take it from us!"

This was, indeed, rising superior to the affliction of the moment; but, alas! it was her last effort; for she went immediately to the rehearsal of the *Midnight Hour*,* and, while she stood on the stage, sickened of a putrid fever, attended with symptoms of the utmost danger, which the physician pronounced to have been engendered solely by the misery and agitation of mind that she had so long endured: though we are happy to add that, through his care and attention, an amiable woman was restored to her friends and to the public.

Mr. Aickin had, by this time, succeeded to the management of the theatre at Liverpool, and he appointed Mr. Mattocks to conduct the concern; Mrs. Mattocks, of course, resumed her situation on that stage; but when the former left that town and engaged in the management of the Edinburgh theatre, Mr. Mattocks went as his representative, and Mrs. Mattocks, we think, returned to London, where, while she was anxiously expecting his arrival, she received the most afflictive news that he was snatched from her for ever.

He died at Edinburgh, where he had been extremely loved and esteemed, as the manner in which his funeral was attended by many of the most respectable inhabitants, fully evinced, and where his memory was revered by every one.

Having thus, with very little deviation, pursued the thread of our memoir to the widowhood of the subject of it, we shall close this sketch with the notice of a few circumstances and desultory observations, which would otherwise have broken too much the chain of our narration.

Mr. and Mrs. Mattocks, in consequence of some disagreement with Mr. Harris, left Covent-garden; but upon the impending ruin that threatened to involve their affairs, she had the good sense to make an application to be reinstated in a situation to which it has appeared that she has had through life the strongest attachment. Her offer was liberally received, and her consequent appearance on the stage most loudly applauded.

* Then about to be performed for the first time.

To add much to what we have already said of the dramatic powers of an actress so universal in her cast of parts and so successful in all of them as Mrs. Mattocks, would here be nugatory; perhaps the highest praise that can, in this respect, be conferred upon her is concentrated in the single circumstance of her having been much admired, and particularly protected, by such an exquisite judge of theatrical talents as the late Mr. Garrick, to whose friendly instructions, in her juvenile years, she has always been ready to attribute much of her professional proficiency.

When Murphy's comedy of "Know Your Own Mind"* was in rehearsal at Covent-garden theatre, in which Mrs. Mattocks played Lady Bell, with a vivacity that, in more instances than one, most seasonably interposed to save the piece, Mr. Garrick wrote the epilogue, which was spoken by her with even more than her usual excellence. As there is something in this production which shows how well the author understood, and how justly he discriminated, the comic powers of Mrs. Mattocks, we shall, therefore, quote its first lines:

If after tragedy 'tis made a rule
To laugh no more, I'll be no titt'ring fool,
To jog you with a joke in tragic doze,
And shake the dew-drops from the weeping rose.†
Prudes of each sex affirm, and who denies?
That in each tear a whimpering Cupid lies.
To such wise formal folk my answer's simple;
A thousand Cupids revel in a dimple;
From these soft nests with laughter out they rush,
Perch'd on your heads, like small birds in a bush.
Beauty resistless in each smile appears:
Are you for dimples, ladies, or for tears?
Dare they in comedy our mirth abridge?
Let us stand up for giggling privilege;
Assert our rights that laughter is no sin,
From the screw'd simper to the broad-fac'd grin!‡

It is a curious circumstance that Murphy, though then a veteran author, was observed, on the first night of this play, walking back-

* Performed, for the first time, in the year 1777.

† Ne'er does the gentle rose revive so soon,
But, bath'd in *nature's tears*, it droops till noon.

Sheridan's Epilogue to Semiramis.

‡ This epilogue was written purposely for Mrs. Mattocks; and the applause she received in it stamped her character in this line of speaking.

ward and forward, on the *opposite prompt*, with his hands behind him, in deep meditation. The applause, that occasionally cheered his production, did not in the least seem to attract his attention. Absorbed in thought, he still continued his pacing up and down, probably to the amusement of some of the performers, while they waited for their *cues*. After Mrs. Mattocks had spoken the epilogue, and while she was receiving the congratulations of the company, he came up to her "with measured steps and slow," exhibiting more the appearance of a corpse than of a living creature, and seizing both her hands pressed them between his, exclaiming at the same time, "Heaven bless you! heaven bless you! to you I owe much of "the success which has attended this evening's performance."

He then turned to Mr. Harris, and with a sensibility, frequently the concomitant of genius, described the agitation of his mind, of which his disordered frame and tremulous accents were indeed sufficient evidences.

We can remember being particularly struck with the excellent performance of Mrs. Mattocks in *Lady Racket*; but we think in the arduous part of *Lady Restless*, who, it has been observed, is much more correctly a jealous wife than Mrs. Oakley, she so strongly depicted that passion, she was so far beyond every other performer, and so truly what the author intended, that we must deem it not only her best character, but the most finished piece of acting that has perhaps ever been seen.*

It has been the peculiar happiness of the life of Mrs. Mattocks, that she has repeatedly been distinguished by the royal patronage: favours of this nature are the most grateful that mortals can receive; they excite all the sensibility of the human bosom, and expand into gratitude far, far indeed, beyond the limited power of expression.

* Of the same opinion were the diurnal critics with respect to Mrs. Mattocks. We can remember it was said, "Her *Lady Restless* was a most "admirable piece of acting; never was the passion of jealousy more strongly "depicted or more admirably supported; upon her every appearance, the "scene was animated, and the audience enchanted."

MEMOIRS OF JAMES QUIN.

[Continued from page 290.]

IN the season of 1735-6, Mr. Quin first performed Falstaff, in the second part of Henry IV., for his own benefit: in 1736-7 he performed Comus, and had the first opportunity of promoting the interest of his friend Thomson, in the tragedy of Agamemnon. The following anecdote, illustrative of his sincere friendship for Thomson, cannot be here omitted. Hearing that this gentleman was confined in a spunging-house, for a debt of about seventy pounds, he repaired to the place, and having inquired for him, was introduced to the bard.

Thomson was a good deal disconcerted at seeing Quin, as he had always taken great pains to conceal his embarrassed state; and the more so, as Quin told him he was come to sup with him; being conscious that all the money he was possessed of would scarcely procure a good one, and that there was no credit in these houses. His anxiety upon this head was, however, removed, upon Quin's informing him, that as he supposed it would have been inconvenient to have had the supper dressed at the place they were in, he had ordered it from an adjacent tavern; and, as a prelude, half a dozen of claret was introduced. Supper being over, and the bottle circulating pretty briskly, Quin said, "It is now time we should balance accounts." This astonished Thomson, who imagined he had some demand on him; and Quin perceiving it, continued:—"Mr. Thomson, the pleasure I have had in perusing your works, I cannot estimate at less than a hundred pounds, and I insist upon now acquitting the debt." On saying this, he put down a note of that value, and took his leave without waiting for a reply.

The season of 1738-9, produced only one new play, in which Mr. Quin performed, and that was Mustapha, by Mallet, which was said to glance both at the king and sir Robert Walpole, in the characters of Solyman the Magnificent, and Rustan his vizier. On the first night of its exhibition, all the chiefs in opposition to the country were assembled, and many speeches were applied, by the audience, to the supposed-grievances of the times, and to persons and characters. The play was, in general, well acted; more particularly the parts of Solyman and Mustapha, by Quin and Millwood.

In March 1739, Mr. Quin was engaged in another dispute with one of his brethren, Mr. Theophilus Cibber, who at that period,

owing to some disgraceful circumstances relative to his conduct to his wife, was not held in the most respectable light. Quin's sarcasm on him is too gross to be here inserted. A duel was fought in the Piazza, Covent-garden, between these two actors; Quin having pulled Cibber out of the Bedford coffee-house, to answer for some words he had used in a letter to Mr. Fleetwood, relative to his refusing a part in *King Lear* for Mr. Quin's benefit. Cibber was slightly wounded in the arm, and Mr. Quin wounded in his fingers. After each had their wounds dressed, they came into the Bedford coffee-house and abused each other, but the company prevented farther mischief.

In the season of 1739-40, there was acted at Drury-lane theatre, on the 12th of November, a tragedy, intitled *The Fatal Retirement*, by a Mr. Anthony Brown, which received its sentence of condemnation on the first night. In this play Mr. Quin had been solicited to perform, which he refused; and the ill success which attended the piece, irritated the author and his friends so much, that they ascribed its failure to the absence of Mr. Quin, and, in consequence of it, insulted him for several nights afterwards, when he appeared on the stage. This treatment at length Mr. Quin resented, and determined to repel. Coming forward, therefore, he addressed the audience, and informed them, "that at the request of the author, he had read his piece before it was acted, and given him his very sincere opinion of it; that it was the very worst play he had ever read in his life, and for that reason had refused to act in it." This spirited explanation was received with great applause; and, for the future, entirely silenced the opposition to him. In this season he performed in Lillo's *Elmerick*.

On the first of August, 1740, an entertainment of a peculiar kind was given by Frederick prince of Wales, father of his present majesty, in the gardens of Cliefden, in commemoration of the accession of king George I., and in honour of the birth of the princess Augusta, afterwards dutchess of Brunswick. It consisted of the *Masque of Alfred*, by Thomson and Mallet; the masque of the *Judgment of Paris*, and some scenes from Rich's pantomimes, by him and La Lanze; with dancing by Signora Barbarini, then lately arrived from Paris. The whole was exhibited upon a theatre in the garden, composed of vegetables, and decorated with festoons of flowers; at the end of which was erected a pavilion for the prince and princess of Wales, prince George, and princess Augusta. The per-

formers in Alfred were Quin, who represented the Hermit; Milward, Mills, Solway, Mrs. Clive, and Horton.

The next season, that of 1740-1, concluded Mr. Quin's engagement at Drury-lane. The irregular conduct of the manager, Mr. Fleetwood, induced Quin to relinquish his situation.

In the summer of 1741, Mr. Quin, Mrs. Clive, Mr. Ryan, and Mademoiselle Chateauneuf, then esteemed the best female dancer in Europe, made an excursion to Dublin. Mr. Quin had been there before, in the month of June 1739, accompanied by Mr. Giffard, and received at his benefit 136*l.*, at that time esteemed a great sum. On his second visit, he opened in his favourite part of Cato, to-as crowded an audience as the theatre could contain. Mrs. Clive next appeared in Lappet, in the Miser; and Mr. Ryan came forward in Iago, to Mr. Quin's Othello. With such excellent performers, we may naturally suppose the plays were admirably sustained. Here Quin played Lord Townley, in the Provoked Husband; Manley, Mr. Ryan; and Lady Townley, Mrs. Clive: he also played King Lear; Cordelia, Mrs. Clive; and Comus, Euphrosyne Mrs. Clive. Mr. Quin, it seems, attended the Dublin company to Cork and Limerick, and the next season performed in Dublin, where he acted the part of Justice Balance, in the Recruiting Officer, at the opening of the theatre in October, on a government night. He afterwards performed a variety of characters of the first cast in the drama, with great applause, and to well-attended houses.

The state of the Irish stage was then so low, that it was often found that the whole receipt of the house was not more than sufficient to discharge Mr. Quin's engagement; and so attentive was he to his interest, and so rigid in demanding its execution, that he refused to let the curtain be drawn up until the money was regularly brought to him.

He left Dublin in February 1741-2; and on his arrival in London, he found the attention of the theatrical world entirely occupied by the merits of Mr. Garrick, who, in October preceding, had begun his theatrical career; and was then performing with prodigious success at Goodman's-fields. The fame of the new performer afforded no pleasure to Quin, who sarcastically observed, that Garrick was a new religion, and that Whitfield was followed for a time; but they would all come to church again.

(To be continued.)

MISCELLANY.

FOR THE MIRROR OF TASTE.

IF, in speaking of the following admirable verses, we were to say of them half what we think, we should indulge ourselves at the expense of the author's feelings. To him, but to him alone, it would appear flattery; and we respect him too sincerely, and set too high a value on his good opinion, to hazard a word which his modesty could interpret into the most distant suggestion of complimentary adulation. Nor is it necessary, since every thing we are capable of uttering on the merit of the lines, will be at once conceived by our readers, when we state that they come from the pen of WILLIAM MOORE SMITH, Esq.

ODE TO SORROW,

Occasioned by the death of Miss Juliana Riché, Mrs. Mary Swift, and Mrs. Grace Coxe, three daughters of Th. Riché, Esq., of Windsor, Bucks county,—addressed to Miss Sally Riché.

Oh thou! whose venom'd arrows tear
The human breast with pangs severe,
To peace, to bliss, the constant foe;
Sorrow! to thee my weeping muse
Once more the leaves of cypress strews,
And bids the mournful verse to flow!

But ah! why steep for me thy dart,
Why pierce again this throbbing heart,
Sad mistress of the tear-worn eye?
Oft with thy wound my soul has bled,
Oft, at thy shrine, my griefs were shed,
While pensive echo learnt to sigh.

Witness bright Anna's sacred tomb!
Bear witness too, the willow'd gloom
Where Schuylkill rolls his waves along!
Constant as evening dimm'd the plain,
Responsive to the night bird's strain
To thee, I've pour'd my plaintive song.

And now, in Windsor's dreary grove,
The former seat of beauty, love,
Dost thou erect thy ebon throne;
Each flow'ret blasted, droops its head,
The pride of all its fields is dead,
And every smile of transport's flown!

There, bending o'er her Julia's urn,
Behold the hapless mother mourn,
A weeping train around her wait;
In vain the hoary father tries
With fondest care to soothe her sighs
And mitigate the blow of fate.

For ah! to Julia's sainted shade
Is sorrow's tribute scarcely paid,
Scarce dry the drops which dew'd her urn;
When, in the pride of all her charms,
From a fond husband's clasping arms
Behold the lov'd Maria—torn!

Yet keen suspense arrests the tear
Which starts to meet Maria's bier,
And points to scenes of deeper gloom;
O'er hapless Grace's fainting head
Disease her baleful wing has spread,
And leads the suff'rer to the tomb.

Oh!—not prophetic be the muse,
Whose boding eye with fear pursues
Yon horror-shedding phantom's way!—
Scar'd at his step, pale Hope expires,
Hygeia's blasted form retires
Beneath his stern resistless sway.

'Tis Death!—what monsters round him wait,
Supporters of their monarch's state;—
High waves his lurid arm in air.
Avert, oh Heav'n!—the fatal blow,
This scene of complicated wo,
Of anguish, agony, despair.

'Tis past;—the fatal dart is sped,
The meek-ey'd victim bows her head,
 Submissive to the dread behest:—
The cares, the toils of life are o'er,
And pain and sorrow now no more
 Can rack the lovely seraph's breast.

She sleeps in peace; but oh! what balm,
What healing, heavenly art, can calm
 The storms that rend each kindred soul?
Long, long must mem'ry prompt the sigh,
The tear long dim affection's eye,
 As in review her virtues roll.

Yet, mid this scene of heighten'd grief,
The muse would try to bring relief,
 And blunt the soul-corroding dart;
Her voice, soft whisp'ring on the gale,
Might o'er the sharpest pangs prevail,
 And consolation's balm impart.

In mild religion's form array'd,
Come then, blest muse, to Sorrow's aid;
 Meek Resignation too, be there:
Oh! bring the sadly pleasing strain
Which steals the soul from thoughts of pain,
 And dries Affliction's trembling tear.

Unfading wreaths thy hand shall twine
Around the consecrated shrine
 Where rests each sainted slumberer's clay!
Nor thou, fond mourner, deem too rude
The bard whose steps have dar'd intrude
 Where you and Sorrow love to stray.

For oft in Windsor's tuneful bowers
'Twas his to spend the social hours,
 When beauty rais'd the song of joy;—
And now affliction clouds the grove,
And mute is music, dead is love,
 Should he the scene ungrateful fly;—

Well might you tax his faithless heart,
 Which bore in all your joys a part,
 And yet refus'd in grief to join!—
 Oh still,—when anguish heaves the sigh,
 When beams the tear in friendship's eye,
 To share those sighs, those tears, be mine.



ANOTHER, BY THE SAME HAND.

On the Death of Mrs. —

O'er a lov'd sister's timeless urn
 Not long the fair Maria sigh'd.
 I go where mortals cease to mourn—
 She said—she smil'd and died.



CHARACTER OF RICHARD III.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MIRROR OF TASTE.

SIR,

WHETHER Richard the Third was as bad a man as he is represented by Shakspeare, or whether he or Henry the Seventh was the perpetrator of the crimes laid to his charge, is of little consequence to the world. Yet as a curious subject of speculation, and a liberal exercise for the mind, it is a question worthy of light discussion, and deserving a place in your miscellany. Perhaps it is not the worse either for being entirely unsusceptible of a conclusive decision. In meeting such points, however unimportant they may really be, the advocates on either side ought to be as much in earnest as possible. Now, sir, I love Shakspeare so much that I wish to establish the character of Richard for ever in the shape in which he has given it. In answer, therefore, to the vindication of the crookback, contained in your number for March, I beg leave to offer the following observations, to which, if you be in reality as impartial as common fame represents you to be, you will afford a place in your next number: they are given without enthusiasm or warmth, and are the result of the cool and deliberate reflections of a very disinterested man.

Richard, born in times of peculiar turbulence, seemed nurtured in ambition; an ambition which knew no restraints, for it violated the most solemn promises and protestations, and the most sacred oaths. Richard Plantagenet, duke of York, his father, who was the

undoubted heir to the crown by descent, prosecuted his right by every crime, that could disgrace talents, evidently great.

By his fall the claim came to his gallant son, Edward IV., who, when dethroned, regained his crown by perjury. To this brother, Richard, when duke of Gloucester, was alike faithful in the cabinet and in the field. In both he conspicuously shone. George, duke of Clarence, the second brother, weak and avaricious, was seldom quiet, often turbulent, and had even been a traitor to the white rose. Clarence and Gloucester, husbands of two sisters, often quarrelled about the rich possessions of the great earl of Warwick, "the king maker," these ladies' father. Richard, taking advantage of the culpable conduct of Clarence, obtained his commitment, his trial, his condemnation, and certainly did not attempt even to stay execution.

What were the designs of Richard after this, and when he saw his elder brother, and his sovereign, sinking with a dropsy, the effect of his intemperance, does not appear from any thing which has reached us.

The death of Edward IV. determined him to, at least, be the governor of the kingdom, and guardian of his young sovereign and nephew. Crimes beget crimes; and ambition, when it has gained one object, seeks another. By the destruction of the beautiful, but weak dowager's faction, he found little opposition, and having obtained the person of the young king and his brother Richard, duke of York, he determined to seize the throne. The duke of Buckingham, the first peer in the realm, if he did not suggest Richard's usurpation, undoubtedly was his chief support in it. A measure soon fatal to himself.

Richard possessed great abilities: he was in the vigor of his age; he had seen much of business; he was artful, dexterous, and insinuating in laying his plans, and bold, daring, and decisive in executing them. Mercy was little understood by any party that succeeded to the sovereign power in the fifteenth century. Richard, far from sparing, seemed prompt to destroy, but never merely, I believe, without supposing it necessary to promote his own aggrandizement, or to secure it. He was far from the unshapen monster, which poets have feigned. Though not exactly of due symmetry in his person, his features were regular. He lost, however, greatly in the comparison when seen with his brother Edward IV., confessedly the handsomest prince of his age; he had not the

elegance of manners of that voluptuous monarch; and though equally brave, and of little less military knowledge, yet he never could inspire an army with such enraptured attachment as his brother did. Richard was a general, Edward an hero. To supply the deficiencies in his character, Richard affected, what most usurpers do, magnificence. His court and tent were more costly than the nation had ever seen. His coronation at Westminster eclipsed all others; that at York, which followed, was as brilliant as the north of England could make it. If we view his laws, they do honour to his understanding. They were best adapted for the good of the subject, as far as related to what was to be transacted between citizen and citizen: the laws were rather specious than solid, for the king knew no law but his will, and the great who were in his favour copied his example.

At first all bent to his mandates; soon disaffection showed itself, and proscriptions followed; these, added to the tragedies acted before his coronation, united a very great body of Yorkists with the Lancastrians. The violent deaths of the sons of Edward IV. gave a finishing blow to Richard's security, though he thought he was establishing his authority by destroying them.

When he raised forces to oppose the handful of meagre sick troops Henry earl of Richmond brought over, he could not have failed being the conqueror, if every one of his pretended friends had not been desirous of his death: all, except his ministers, were secretly engaged to desert him, and he died less pitied than any other sovereign who fell so gallantly in supporting himself and his cause.

I have read, with all the attention possible, lord Orford's "Historic Doubts," and the answers of his lordship's opponents.

That Richard the Third was assisting in the murder of Edward, prince of Wales, son of Henry VI., I think very probable. This nefarious act was not a deliberate crime: it was perpetrated in the fury of passion. Edward IV., enraged at the spirited but ill-timed answer of the prince, instantly struck him with his gauntlet. This was, as it were, a signal for the great personages present to attack the youth: the two royal dukes, and the two noblemen, stabbed him with their daggers or swords, and then thrust him out of the apartment; their attendants, to show their zeal, completed the horrid deed. Edward IV. was most to blame. Had he not struck the prince, or had he commanded the four others to desist from

farther violence, when he had given the blow, Edward would have been saved.

The death of Henry VI. was premeditated. It was performed with the consent, and perhaps at the desire of a victorious army, as it were in honour of their conquest at Tewkesbury, and to assure them that they were freed from all future danger from the Lancastrians. The murder was accompanied with the most indecent festivities. Whether Richard superintended the execution, or killed with his own hand the royal captive, cannot be known. From the ferocity and sanguinary character of Edward IV., it is not improbable that he persuaded the army to demand it, or acquiesced in their desire, as a matter of prudent precaution, and might commission Richard to see it done.

That the death of Clarence was brought about by the intrigues of Richard there can be no doubt. When Edward IV. lamented that no one would plead for Clarence, it should have taught him no longer to confide in Gloucester; but, on the contrary, it should have instigated him to have fenced his family so that they could not have been injured by so unnatural a character.

That Richard murdered his nephews, Edward V., and Richard, duke of York, I see no reason to doubt. That the manner of their deaths was not exactly known at the time appears evident, yet it was generally believed to have been by suffocation in their beds in the tower, and that their bodies were buried there under the stairs. In Charles the Second's reign, the bones of two youths were found under a staircase in the tower. There may have been other murders committed in the tower, besides theirs and that of Henry VI.; yet probably the remains of none were secretly buried there, but those of these two unhappy youths. All other state prisoners in the tower have been buried openly. No other human bones have been ever discovered in the tower that we know of. This weighs greatly with me. Besides, there have never been missed two young persons imprisoned there but them. That the youths, whose bones were thus discovered, had been murdered is self-evident: for, if they had died natural deaths, they would have been buried in consecrated ground. That the bodies had not been buried any very great length of time we may suppose, because a staircase, if a wooden one, as I suppose this was, seldom lasts more than two or three centuries, though then made of oak and very massy. Is it not wonderful that not one of the disputants, on this subject, should quote Speed, whose au-

thority is so directly adverse to lord Orford? Take his exact words: "I have heard," says this writer, in his Chronicle, "by credible report, of such as were secret with his [Richard's] chamberlaine, that after this abominable deed done, [the murder of his nephews] he never had quiet in his mind; he never thought himself sure; but where he went his eies ever whirled about; his body privily fenced; his hand ever on his dagger; his countenance and manner like one alwaies readie to strike againe; he took il rest a nights, lay long waking and musing, sore wearied with care and watch, rather slumbered than slept, troubled with fearful dreames, soddenly sometimes start up, and leapt out of his bed, and ranne about the chamber, so was his restlesse heart continually tossed and tumbled with the tedious impression and stormy remembrance of his abominable deed."

If we view Richard in all points, we shall see him extremely wicked. His atrocities, after the death of Edward IV., are such as appal. They exceed the sanguinary acts which were committed in the height of the civil wars. There was not even a semblance of trial; and yet there had been no battle fought, no hostile act. This did not prevent many openly revolting from him when he became king, and many others secretly favouring the earl of Richmond, afterwards Henry VII.

That he was extremely ungrateful to Edward IV., the best, the kindest of brothers, is self-evident in his conduct towards that monarch's sons. That he was inflexible and unforgiving to his other brother, Clarence, has also been seen. Nor was he much kinder to Clarence's children than to Edward's. If we view him as a son, he will appear in the highest degree culpable. He, like Orleans, sullied, as far as he could, the reputation of his mother. Richard made his lewd, when giving life to his elder brethren!! Orleans, when conferring existence even on himself!!! princesses whose fames were as spotless as their sons, Richard and Philip, were polluted. As a husband, Richard was cold and reserved; one who watched, with the utmost impatience, the sickness which was hastening his wife to her end, without his assistance, that he might incestuously unite himself to the real heir of the throne, Elizabeth, eldest daughter of his brother, Edward IV.,—the *real heir* by the murder of her brothers, by the cruel command of him the uncle, who now sought her hand. If Richard had any of nature's softer feelings, it was the paternal ones. He appears not only to have tenderly loved

Edward prince of Wales, his only child by his queen, but even to have been solicitous for the welfare of his illegitimate issue.

Let me add, that lord Orford began to "doubt" Richard's virtues, and in the posthumous "Historic" ones of this king, his lordship seems to think that those wicked actions, he most disbelieved, might have been performed by him. This nobleman had caprices; one was his enmity to *sovereigns* and their ministers. Of all potentates, he most hated the character of Henry VII., and wished to wipe away the stains of Richard III., merely to lower Henry's reputation, who, he would insinuate, was greatly his inferior.

JOHANNA BAPTISTA VERUE,

DAUGHTER of the duke de Luynes, and a much beloved wife of the count de Verue, a woman of extraordinary beauty, intellect and accomplishment, but an unfaithful wife; to this defect in duty, her husband undesignedly contributed. Not content with possessing such excellence, joined to a love of retirement and domestic life, the thoughtless and imprudent count was perpetually speaking of her charms to his royal master, Victor Amadeus, king of Sardinia and duke of Savoy; a sovereign, who, with many good qualities, was alternately a prey to female art, capricious infatuation, and unavailing repentance.

Hearing so much of the countess de Verue, and her husband frequently boasting how much she excelled all the ladies he saw, the king asked why he did not bring her to Turin? As if impatient of the happiness he enjoyed, and in an unlucky moment, he introduced her at court: she became a favourite with the queen, who little suspected that she was encouraging a rival in the affections of her husband.

Amadeus soon became passionately fond of her. Princes and kings, it has been said, make rapid strides in love: the countess, fascinated by royal attentions, irritated by some real or imaginary neglect on the part of her husband, forgot her duty, and forfeited her reputation.

A separate establishment, guards, and other accompaniments of royalty, soon proclaimed to the indignant public her splendid infamy.

The injured queen was for a long time unacquainted with their amours, till with a design of showing the height of his regard for

his fair favourite, and in that peculiar fatality, which often accompanies guilt, Victor actually invited his royal consort to a public entertainment, given in honour of the birth of a child he had by the countess.

It was not till the company sat down to table that the eyes of the unhappy wife were open to the cruel and unfeeling conduct of her husband. The guilty countess was adorned with some of the most valuable of the jewels, which had been presented to the queen on her marriage; naturally provoked at such indecorous and unfeeling treatment, after reproaching them for thus adding insult to injury, the queen immediately left the room.

For the honour of the count, it ought to be recorded, that the moment he perceived the consequences of his folly approaching, he could not reconcile it to himself to remain a silent and contented spectator of domestic dishonour; he repented a thousand times, as we all do, of our indiscretions,—*when it is too late.*

Having demanded an audience of the king, which, as guilt is always a coward, was denied, in a short interview with his infatuated wife, he pointed out the ingratitude and baseness of her conduct; spoke of the frail texture of royal attachments, and unlawful love; professed himself ready to forgive what had passed, if she would directly separate from her seducer, and with her husband—whom she once professed to love—quit Turin for ever.

Their conversation was interrupted by a message from the king, who probably dreaded the result of so trying a struggle: but the lady showing no symptom of returning duty, the count left her in agonies; and, after indignantly rejecting a pension of two hundred thousand livres, settled on him by the king, the count quitted Turin, and repaired to Paris.

In the blandishments of unhallowed pleasure, and forgetful of her nuptial vows, three years passed quickly away. At length, perceiving a diminution of royal favour, stimulated by compunction, and a return of suppressed affection for her absent husband, and probably disgusted, as every sensible and delicate woman must be, at her degraded condition, which, excepting the thin veil of splendor, differed in no essential from the odious and obscene situation of a prostitute, with the additional character of a foul and ungrateful adulteress, the countess determined to leave the king.

Taking advantage of his absence, on a journey to Chambery, and assisted by her brother, who resided at Paris, and with whom she

had corresponded on the subject, relays of post-horses were provided at short distances; she departed from Turin, and was half way to Paris before Amadeus was apprised of her departure.

The queen's jewels, with a letter for the king, were found on her toilet;—she apologized for her conduct, imputing it to the anguish of repentance for her sinful life; she expressed the warmest sense of his kindness and attention, and concluded with earnestly entreating his majesty to be reconciled to the queen, as it would add considerably to her peace of mind to hear that she was no longer the occasion of separating him from so good and worthy a woman.

Victor, chagrined at her abrupt departure, and apparent want of tenderness, bitterly cursed the whole sex in a transport of rage; but impelled rather by necessity than inclination, he reluctantly followed her advice.

The countess, unhappy although considerably enriched, and still feeling the impressions of her first love, which, however faithless or unworthy the object of it, or we ourselves may prove, we never recollect without regret; the countess, in the hope of being able to compensate for her failure by her future good conduct, and probably wishing to emerge from the infamy of her condition, planned a reconciliation with her husband.

This purpose she wished to accomplish without subjecting herself to the mortification of a notorious refusal. An opportunity soon offered of putting her scheme into execution, and in her own way.

A public entertainment, with a grand masquerade, being announced to be given by a prince of the blood, a few louis-d'ors to his valet enabled the lady to find out that the count de Verue was to be present, and the dress he was to wear.

While the unfaithful wife was making these inquiries, she could not help detaining the servant, an old and faithful domestic of the family, to ask him a few questions concerning his master—the life he led, and the company he kept.

The feelings of the countess may be easily imagined, when the valet informed her that his master neither enjoyed health nor spirits since he left Turin; that his sister, alarmed at the state of her brother's health, had insisted on his consulting a physician, who described the disease as an affection of the mind, entirely out of the reach of medicine, and recommended company and dissipation.

On this principle the unhappy man had been prevailed on to

promise his sister that he would accompany her to the masquerade. The valet added, that the count saw little company, but spent the greatest part of his time in his own room; that his chief attention seemed occupied by a picture, on which he fixed his melancholy eyes for hours together. "A picture," replied the countess, with augmented emotion,— "a picture! and of whom?"—"Of yourself, madam," said the valet, in an emphatic expressive manner, and immediately quitted the apartment. The adulteress, as if a dagger had pierced her vitals, instantly sunk on the floor in the agonies of bitter repentance.

While she had been passing her unhallowed hours in chambering and wantonness, her deserted husband, the object of her earliest love, and for whom, even in the moments of infidelity, she was not able wholly to suppress her affection, her deserted husband had been solitary, disconsolate, comfortless, and unhappy; still doting on the unfaithful blaster of all his joys.

Such reflections stimulated the countess to pursue her purpose with augmented eagerness; she prepared for the masquerade, and resolved to appear in the assumed character of Diana.

The day which was to decide her fate at length arrived; and as midnight approached, being conveyed to the festive spot, she was literally what she appeared to be, the goddess of the night. Her splendid and expensive dress, ornamented with jewels which were not within the reach of common finances, and her superior air and deportment, attracting general attention.

It was some time before the count appeared: when at last he entered the room, supported by his sister, his debilitated appearance and slow pace soon caught her eye,—HE WAS THE GHOST OF DEPARTED JOY.

Having seated himself near where she sat, the countess soon contrived to enter into conversation with him, in that kind of audible whisper which, on such occasions, is the general vehicle of folly or of crime. From the state of her feelings she was unable to exhibit external gaiety, while discontent sat heavy on her heart.

Affecting, or actually experiencing indisposition, and hinting a wish to retire, she mentioned, with regret, that her carriage was sent home with orders not to return till a late hour. The count, interested in the fate of the fair stranger, offered to attend her home in his own coach, which he had ordered to wait, designing to make only a short stay. With apparent reluctance, but inward satisfac-

tion, she accepted his offer; and they were driven to a house, in magnificence nearly approaching to a palace, in the Fauxbourg, St. Germaine.

The count, though ill able, insisted on handing the lady from his coach. As she descended, the mask, by accident or design, dropped from her face, and discovered that countenance he had so often looked on with tenderness and rapture, drowned in tears.

He paused for a moment, distracted by love, which was still ardent, and resentment proportionably keen; the latter predominated, and, in the anguish of a husband irreparably injured, he turned from the woman he once adored, without uttering a word.

The miserable countess, sinking under the horrors of her situation, was conveyed by the attendants to her apartment; and De Verue, notwithstanding the state of his health, soon after joined a regiment on actual service, and met with that death he had long and ardently desired.

This is *another* of the numerous instances daily occurring, in which a little prudence, and a little common sense, would have prevented irretrievable calamity.

The count de Verue had too high an opinion of his wife's chastity, and thought she would, like gold, be more pure for passing through the fire;—poor human nature is not made of materials for such trials;—**LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION** is a safe axiom, laid down by one who well knew, because he made us what we are.

COMPARISONS.

PLATO has very sagaciously observed, that of all the shipwrecks to which the human understanding is liable on the sea of ratiocination, the most common is that of splitting on the rock of false comparisons, or similitudes.

LORD NELSON.

FROM a production of the pen of Mr. SHERIDAN, employed on such a subject as Lord NELSON, every reader will expect much. Yet no reader will be disappointed in his expectations from the following inscription on the tablet of the statue erected to that distinguished commander, which has been recently exposed to public view in Guild Hall, London.

TO
HORATIO VISCOUNT AND BARON NELSON,
Vice-Admiral of the White, and Knight of the most Honourable Order of the Bath:

A Man, amongst the few who appear
At different periods, to have been created
To promote the grandeur, and add to the security of nations:
Inciting by their high example their fellow mortals
Through all succeeding times, to pursue the course
That leads to the exaltation of our imperfect nature.

PROVIDENCE,
That planted in Nelson's breast an ardent passion for renown,
Had bounteously endowed him with the transcendent talents
Necessary to the great purposes
He was destined to accomplish.
At an early period of life
He entered into the naval service of his country:
And early were the instances which mark'd
The fearless nature and enterprise of his character:
Uniting to the loftiest spirit and the justest title to self-confidence.

A strict and humble obedience to
The sovereign rule of discipline and subordination.
Rising by due gradation to command,
He infused into the bosoms of those he led
The valorous ardor and enthusiastic zeal
For the service of his King and Country
Which animated his own;
And while he acquired the love of all,
By the sweetness and moderation of his temper,
He inspired a universal confidence
In the never-failing resources of his capacious mind.

It will be for History to relate
The many great exploits, through which,
Solicitous of peril, and regardless of wounds,
He became the glory of his profession!
But it belongs to this brief record of his illustrious career
To say, that he commanded and conquered
At the Battles of the NILE and COPENHAGEN:
Victories never before equalled.
Yet afterwards surpassed by his own late achievement,
The Battle of TRAFALGAR!
Fought on the 21st of October, in the year 1805.
On that day, before the conclusion of the action,
He fell, mortally wounded;
But the sources of life and sense failed not until it was known to
Him that the destruction of the enemy being completed,
The glory of his country and his own had attained their summit;
Then laying his hand on his brave heart,
With a look of exalted resignation to the will
Of the Supreme Disposer of the Fate of Man and Nations,
He expired.

The Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council,
Of the City of London,
Have caused this Monument to be erected;
Not in the presumptuous hope of sustaining the departed Hero's memory,
But to manifest their estimation of the Man,
And their admiration of his deeds.
This Testimony of their Gratitude,
They trust will remain as immortal
As their own renowned City shall exist.

The period to
NELSON'S FAME
Can only be
THE END OF TIME!

NEW PLAYS.

It were to be wished that, without violating the rights of the people, some legal power could be erected to prevent the representation of stupid plays; and that, instead of a lord chamberlain, a committee were to be appointed to examine each production, and report upon its qualities. This committee we would have composed of gentlemen of acknowledged taste; and if it were for nothing else but one saying of his, we would make Mr. Sheridan perpetual chairman.—On the 12th of May, 1807, he, from the election hustings at Covent-garden, paid this keen and just compliment to his cotemporary dramatists. Talking of a low blackguard in the crowd, who had been railing at him with such coarse wit as the nomenclature of St. Giles's supplied him with, Mr. Sheridan said to the people, "I can assure you that, if political affairs had not drawn my attention of late from the theatre, *I would back that person for writing a play against all the authors who bring out the TRASH of the present day!*"

The present year is likely to be more than ordinarily prolific of this TRASH, this murderer-drama trash.—Before us lies a list of plays—such trash!! Were the bones of Shakspeare yet sticking together, his skeleton would turn in its coffin at the bare mention of them. Yet we must introduce them to our readers.

First, a play called

OURSELVES.

Mark, reader, how much even a partial English writer, endeavouring to make the most of it, can say of this piece.

"A new play has been presented at the Lyceum, under the title of *Ourselves*. This play is certainly not intitled to take very high ground, but it would certainly be equally unjust to deny it a very considerable merit. The authoress of it is the lady to whom the public is indebted for the *School for Friends*. It is accordingly marked with the character of that drama; it is somewhat too sentimental and too heavy, but is not deficient in nature and interest. The plot, moreover, has all the ordinary faults of plots taken from novels rather than from the shifting scene of life. Concealed fathers, fortunes unexpectedly dropt from the clouds, and thousands tossed about as so much dirt, are all too removed from common life and daily use to intitle any comedy to take a high rank which deals in them. The world however is not so barren, but that even intricate

plots may be really found on the stage of life, and the dramatist would do well to transfer them as they are to his canvas.

"The dramatists of the present day are all spoiled by the puerile taste after what they term incident and bustle; in pursuit of which incident and of which bustle they outrage all nature and probability, and reduce the drama to a mere brisk farce. Another class, on the other hand, being determined to instruct, forget that it is necessary to amuse; they accordingly plunge into *sentiment*, and become insufferably dull. There are not more than three sentimental plays in the whole catalogue of acting dramas; and it is a matter of astonishment to us why this kind of writing has not gone out of fashion.

"The dialogue of these kind of plays is of the same nature with the plot. It is a mixture of silk and worsted, of fustian and satin, which has no existence but on the stage. The ordinary language of life is never in measured sentences. Nothing is so tedious, so intolerable, as these speaking ladies and gentlemen.

"The drama of *Ourselves*, however, seems to be one of the best of the kind; but as the whole kind is in no favour with us, we cannot find it in our hearts to give it much praise.—It is, perhaps, as good as Kelly's *False Delicacy*, the parent of all this sentimental trash."

The next is a comedy, called

THE GAZETTE EXTRAORDINARY.

By an advertisement in a London paper, we are told that this is the production of Mr. HOLMAN.—And the following is the account given of it by the London critics.

"The plot of 'The Gazette Extraordinary' arises out of an apparent noncompliance with certain limitations under the will of Lord De Mallory's grandfather; by one of which, Lady Julia Sandforth is compelled either to receive the hand of Lord De Mallory in marriage, or forfeit the whole of her fortune. That young lady, who has not seen his lordship for some years, became early prepossessed against him, and, rather than marry against her inclinations, quits De Mallory castle, and places herself under the protection of Mr. Heartworth, a plain, honest, blunt, country gentleman, whose father having married a sister of the deceased Lord De Mallory, was the innocent cause of her present embarrassing situation. The countess dowager De Mallory, incensed at the refusal of Lady Julia Sandforth to marry her son, upon his return from abroad, endeavours to

incense him against that young lady, by stating, that the cause of her abrupt departure was a secret affection for Sir Harry Aspen, and urges him to fulfil the intentions of his grandfather, by offering his hand to Miss Alford. Lord De Mallory, whose inclinations towards Lady Julia are very different from those of that young lady towards him, goes in pursuit of the runaway; and arriving at the house of Mr. Heartworth under the assumed name of his friend Major Clayton, prevails upon Dr. Suitall (a self-sufficient coxcomb) to be admitted to a party of pleasure on the lake of Windermere, in a fete given by Mr. Heartworth in honour of Lady Julia's arrival. In the course of this aquatic excursion, circumstances occur by which the assumed Major Clayton wins the affections of Lady Julia, and strongly ingratiates himself in the good opinion of Mr. Heartworth, who, upon the recommendation of Dr. Suitall, imagines him to be the officer of that name, whose gallant conduct in the East Indies he had read an account of in the gazette extraordinary. Mr. Heartworth, accidentally discovering the mutual affection of Lord De Mallory and Lady Julia, presses the latter to accept his lordship's hand; but he, indignant at his rejection as Lord De Mallory, declines that honour, and leaves them abruptly. Lady Julia, in this perplexing situation, is prevailed upon by Randall to return to De Mallory castle, to vindicate her character from the unjust imputations of the dowager Countess De Mallory. An *eclaircissement* takes place between all the parties concerned in the will of Lord De Mallory's grandfather; and his lordship is united to Lady Julia with the full consent of his mother.

"We regret that we can give very little praise to a plot of this kind, and almost as little to the style in which it is executed in the detail of the acts and scenes.

"Of all plots there are none more vile than what may be called the *novel-plots*, the nature and manners of a circulating library.

"The magazine of life produces a very sufficient variety for a writer of genius and observation. Why collect the refuse of Leadenhall-street? Why deal in modes and combinations which were never seen in real life?

"The proper source of ridicule is in natural humour, and not in situations. Humour attaches to character; situation belongs properly to farce and caricature. It is very easy to introduce a man ignorant of the persons with whom he is discoursing, and thereby, by making him speak under this error and ignorance, cause him to utter things

which are incongruous and contrary to the true state of their respective relations. This incongruity it is that constitutes the ridiculous, and surely nothing is so easy, so common-place, and so absurd, as this kind of humour. The characters were well supported by the performers. The dialogue of this piece was occasionally forcible and vigorous."

The next, and (we will not say the best, for where nothing is good, nothing can be best) the least bad, because the most interesting, is a melo-drama, intitled

TIMOUR THE TARTAR,

concerning which the language of a London critic is as follows:

"A modern French writer has observed that, on the first night of a new piece, the critic is constrained to attend so much to the performances of the pit, that if some confusion should appear in his account of what passes on the stage, it ought in candor to be forgiven. For this indulgence, on the present occasion, we feel it necessary to put in our claim, as if we were not obliged to pay particular attention to the scenes of the pit, the proceedings of the upper boxes and gallery were such as to give greater interruption to the anxious observer; and the efforts of the majority of the house to overpower the hostility thus manifested, had the effect of heightening his perplexity.

"Before the commencement of the piece, it was evident there was a strong party against it. The opposition threw a great number of handbills from the upper boxes, containing (as we understood) something against equestrian performances being introduced at the regular theatre. These, however, met with a very unfavourable reception; nearly the whole were torn to pieces, and those who had dispersed them were fervently hissed.

"This melo-drama (said to be from the pen of M. G. LEWIS) is uncommonly interesting from beginning to end.

"Timour, the Tartar, having usurped the throne, confines the son of the late king in a tower, the care of which he intrusts to his father, Oglou. Faithful to his sovereign, yet afraid of his fierce son, Oglou becomes the jailer of the young prince, with a view of alleviating his sufferings, and of ultimately restoring him to liberty. The mother of the prince imposes herself on Timour as the Georgian princess (to whom he wished, for purposes of ambition, to be united) in the hope of being enabled to snatch her son from confinement. Oglou knows her, but conceals his knowledge of her

from Timour. Subsequently, however, he discloses who she is; and in consequence she is confined. He visits her in prison, and explains away his seeming perfidy by informing her that Octa, who had just arrived, would infallibly have betrayed her, had he not appeared her enemy; and thus she would have been plunged in the same distress without its being in his power to assist her, as he might hope to do, by thus retaining his power, and the confidence of Timour. He forms a plan for her escape at the hour of midnight, and conducts the young prince to her chamber. The plan is frustrated by the presence of Timour, who, smitten with the charms of the queen, resolves on immediately espousing her. The young prince is nearly sacrificed, but is at length with much difficulty placed in safety with his friends, the Georgians, who come to attack the castle. Timour flies to the ramparts with the queen, and threatens his assailants with her death, if they refuse to surrender the prince. This threat he is about to execute, when his arm is arrested by his father. The queen flies, Timour pursues, and the former precipitates herself from the ramparts into the waves which are seen below. The prince flies to her aid on horseback, and saves her from a watery grave. A general battle ensues between the Georgians and the partisans of Timour; a breach is made in the wall of the castle with a battering ram; and finally, the tyrant, vanquished, is about to fall by the sword of a Georgian, when the entrance of Oglou saves his life, which the queen had previously promised should be spared. The piece ends with the destruction of Timour's castle by fire.

"Such is the rough outline of this piece, which greatly surpasses in merit as in splendor any thing of the kind which we have seen for a long time. As a literary production it may not rank very high; but as an ingenious dramatic production, rich in contrivance and incident, and above all, in interest, it is intitled to great praise. In some parts there is rather a confusion; and in the first part of the second act the action is too much hurried. The situations are however good; and the characters strongly drawn, and admirably supported, insure it a long run of popularity. In every part there is something to strike and to please; and with all the grandeur it has none of the fatiguing dulness usually attendant on stage pageantry.

"Our limits will not at present admit of our particularizing all the scenes which astonish with their extraordinary grandeur in this

truly magnificent spectacle. In the first act, the splendid combat scene exceeded all we had previously witnessed. The opening of the second act charmed us with a scene representing a chamber in the castle of Timour. Than this beautiful display of eastern grandeur nothing could be more strikingly superb. The transparent glow which burst on the admiring eye seemed the effect of magic, and not only filled us with astonishment at the voluptuous grandeur of Timour, but with admiration of the taste of the artist by whom it was designed. The charmingly tasteful manner in which it was adorned with mother of pearl, and all which nature could furnish, and a chastened fancy select, rendered it uncommonly interesting, and won from the audience repeated peals of applause. The last scene, in which the castle of Timour, and a beautiful water-fall, are the most conspicuous objects, would be injured in its effect by too minute a description. It is impossible to conceive any thing more striking; and the exertions of the horses have a wonderful effect.

“ We have already paid a tribute to the merits of the performers. The music, by King, for its beauty and grandeur, is admirably adapted to the piece; and if interesting scenes, animated action, and magnificent decorations, heightened by genuine harmony, can gain upon the town, those most disposed to condemn the introduction of horses will not be sorry that, in return for their sneers and opposition, the managers of this theatre have at length thought proper to give them a *Tartar*.”

The following hoax upon Mr. Kemble, and just sneer at his *picturesquing* and *spectacling*, appeared in a London paper.

“ It is said that Mr. Kemble is to appear in the new melo-drama, from the pen of Mr. Monk Lewis, which is forthcoming at Covent-garden theatre. One great object of this new drama is to introduce a grand equestrian spectacle; and it is said that on this occasion Mr. Kemble *himself is to be mounted on a white charger*.”

Whether it was this paragraph that made him ashamed of this equestrian exploit or not, it is not for us to conjecture—but Mr. Kemble did not appear *mounted on a white charger*. That task devolved on Mrs. H. Johnston who, as the papers say, “ mounted on a white horse, appeared to uncommon advantage, and seemed to manage her courser with great courage and address.”

By one of that kind of associations of ideas which we frequently experience, and which delight us by bringing our youth and age into company together, we found our thoughts drawn back, by this ca-

pering upon white horses, to a story which, poured into the ear of our infancy, became an article of our faith, and remained so till we reached the age of puberty, and, we verily believe, will continue to hold converse with our fancy to the end of life. About a mile from the town where our boyish days were spent, there was a vast open space, where it was said, and believed, the fairies took delight to exercise;—and there, many good souls declared they had frequently seen the king and queen of the fairies galloping on *white chargers* in a ring, round and round by the hour, and followed by troops of subject fairies.

As Mr. Lewis spares no pains to get information on those important articles, and has no doubt travelled in Ireland, a country more deeply versed than most others in that kind of lore, it is not unlikely that he may have heard this story. Indeed, the idea of riding on the stage on a *white steed* is so exactly the thing, that we should not be surprised to hear of some old Irish nurse laying claim to her share in the merit of it. The age of infant Roscii and Rosciæ is past, or it is probable that Miss Mudie or some other infant would be employed to ride as queen of the fays.—Oh Shakspeare, Shakspeare!

“Oh flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified!”

From a subsequent publication we extract the following observations.—“Timour the Tartar seems drawn by the author as a likeness of Bonaparte; vulgarly, ambitious, impetuously cruel, the offspring of ignorance and poverty. There wants nothing but what must one day or other be the denouement, *defeat*, to be an exact portrait.

“The new grand spectacle of Timour the Tartar promises to exceed even Blue Beard in attraction and popularity. Had it been produced earlier in the season, the profit of the theatre must have been immense; but now Timour will be stopt in the midst of his successful career by the benefits, which begin in three weeks, when the cavalry will troop off to their country quarters.”

Lastly, a new opera was brought out at the Lyceum, in the Strand, and received such unqualified disapprobation, that we shall in all probability be saved the mortification of seeing it on this side of the ocean. The title of this piece, which was no doubt execrable or it would not have been damned, is

THE AMERICANS.

By what we have been able to collect respecting it, the main spring which sets the business of this opera in motion is an Irish

author who, not finding that encouragement to which he thinks himself intitled, passes over to this country to surprise the people of it and make his fortune with his talents. Being an Irishman, he is of course made a blunderer, for that seems to be the only purpose for which an Hibernian is ever introduced upon the stage: and this makes all the Irish characters on the stage so like to each other that when one is seen the whole of them are sufficiently known. This Irishman now in question, being landed in America, obtrudes himself and his works upon every one he meets, and insists upon reading some of them to each stranger that comes across him. Though there is nothing new or original in this thought, it is sufficiently calculated to give rise to comic incidents and to sharp reflections, had it been well managed; but as the wit of it was already worn to shreds by repeated transmission through the jest books,—as the humour was low, coarse, and vulgar,—as the only features of novelty of which it could boast belonged to characters disgusting either by their vice or folly,—as the plot was bad and unconnected,—and above all, as it contained a calumny no less false than insulting on that most harmless, useful, and respectable of all sects, the QUAKERS, it met, as it deserved, pointed contempt and severe reprobation from the British audience.

How deficient soever the London audience may be, on certain occasions, in dramatic taste, they never fail to evince a sense of justice too strong to be warped by any temporary gratification that can be derived from even the best comic performance. We could recount many instances of this, but will for the present confine ourselves to one which happened about three years ago. An after-piece made its appearance, and was so replete with humour that it became very popular. The comic effect of it arose from the embarrassments to which the hero is subjected *in his course of wooing*, by his endeavours to keep his name of “HOG-FLESH” concealed, and by the ridiculous distresses attending the detection of it. While the people were in the full tide of enjoyment of this pleasant piece, a discovery was accidentally made that a respectable family of the name of *Hogflesh* actually did exist in London, when the public at once put the farce down, choosing rather to dispense with their nightly gratification, than to mortify or encroach upon the feelings of a worthy family.

RICHARD CUMBERLAND, ESQ.

WE are sorry to have it to relate that the muses of Britain have wept over the bier of CUMBERLAND, and that Genius and Literature have now seen the last of that society of their chosen sons, which met in Gerard-street, laid in the grave. The British prints inform us, that this excellent man and charming writer died last month, after a short illness, in the EIGHTY-FIFTH YEAR OF HIS AGE.

As a dramatic writer, his name will live as long as the English stage; and some of his works will continue to be represented for the same period. His most popular play was *The West Indian*; and after a long interval, his *Wheel of Fortune* was rendered hardly less popular by the acting of Mr. Kemble. Mr. Cumberland was universally admitted to be a profound scholar, as well as an able writer in various departments of literature, and a poet of no inferior class. He abounded in anecdotes, which he related in a terse, elegant, and pleasing manner; altogether, Mr. Cumberland may be considered as one of the most distinguished ornaments of British literature. He was the son of Dr. Cumberland, Bishop of Kilmore, by the youngest daughter of the celebrated Dr. Bentley.

W. BOSCAWEN, ESQ.

The friends of literature and admirers of genius will join us in lamenting the death of W. BOSCAWEN, Esq., who died nearly at the same time with Mr. Cumberland. He was an excellent scholar, a good poet, and a truly worthy man. His translation of HORACE is esteemed the best English version, in point of accuracy and spirit. He was one of the Commissioners of the Victualling Office.

WE hope our correspondent, 'Kais,' will excuse the delay that has taken place in the publication of the following lines, which have too much merit to be overlooked, if they had not, by accident, been mixed with other papers.

Communicated for the *Mirror of Taste*.

TO PLEASURE.

Ah, Pleasure, say why dies thy light
Like moon-beams on the eye of day?
Why still does Sorrow shed her night,
And dim with mists thy living ray?

Ah say, why fades thy rose so soon,
 While yet so perfum'd is its breath?
 Why are its dew-drops drunk ere noon?
 Ere eve why sinks thy flow'r in death?

I drank thy cup; thy wreath I wore;
 The dregs remain—the flow'rs have faded:
 Oh ne'er can future joys restore
 The peace by recollection shaded.

KAIS.

 FRAGMENTS OF OLD ENGLISH POETRY.

TO THE WATER NYMPHS, DRINKING AT THE FOUNTAIN.

Reach, with your whiter hands, to me
 Some crystal of the spring;
 And I about the cup shall see
 Fresh lilies flourishing.

Or else, sweet nymphs, do you but this—
 To the glass your lips incline;
 And I shall see by that one kiss
 The water turn'd to wine.

 TO ELECTRA.

I dare not ask a kiss,
 I dare not beg a smile,
 Lest, having that or this,
 I might grow proud the while.

No, no; the utmost share
 Of my desire shall be
 Only to kiss that air
 That lately kissed thee.

 WHAT KIND OF MISTRESS HE WOULD HAVE.

Be the mistress of my choice
 Plain in manners, clear in voice;
 Be she witty, more than wise,
 Pure enough, though not precise;

Be she showing in her dress,
 Like a civil wilderness,
 That the curious may detect
 Order in a sweet neglect;
 Be she rolling in her eye,
 Tempting all the passers-by,
 And each ringlet of her hair
 An enchantment, or a snare,
 For to catch the lookers-on,
 But herself held fast by none;
 Let her Lucrece all day be,
 Thais in the night to me;
 Be she such as neither will
 Famish me, nor overfill.

 TO JEALOUSY.

O Jealousy, thou art
 The canker of the heart;
 And mak'st all hell
 Where thou dost dwell;
 For pity be
 No fury or no firebrand to me!
 Far from me I'll remove
 All thoughts of irksome love;
 And turn to snow,
 Or crystal grow,
 To keep still free,
 O soul-tormenting Jealousy, from thee!

 THE PRIMROSE.

Ask me why I send you here
 This sweet infant of the year—
 Ask me, why I send to you
 This primrose thus besprent with dew—
 I will whisper to your ears
 The sweets of love are mix'd with tears.

Ask me, why this flow'r does shew
 So yellow-green and sickly too—

Ask me, why the stalk is weak
 And bending, yet it doth not break—
 I will answer—these discover
 What fainting hopes are in a lover.

UPON JULIA'S HAIR FILLED WITH DEW.

Dew sat on Julia's hair,
 And spangled too,
 Like leaves that laden are
 With trembling dew;
 Or glitter'd to my sight,
 As when the beams
 Have their reflected light
 Danc'd by the streams.

UPON HIS DEPARTURE HENCE.

Thus I
 Pass by
 And die,
 As one
 Unknown
 And gone;
 I'm made
 A shade
 And laid
 I' th' grave;
 There have
 My cave,
 Where well
 I dwell,
 Farewel!

TO HIS VERSES.

What will ye, my poor orphans, do
 When I must leave the world and you?
 Who'll give you then a shelt'ring shed,
 Or credit ye, when I am dead?
 Who'll let ye by their fireside sit,

Although ye have a stock of wit,
Already coin'd, to pay for it?
I cannot tell; unless there be
Some race of old humanity
Left (of the large heart and long hand)
Alive, as noble Westmoreland,
Or gallant Newark, which brave two
May fost'ring fathers be to you.
If not, expect to be no less
Ill us'd than babes left fatherless.

AMERICAN ELOQUENCE.

It may be doubted whether any work hitherto published in America has brought to the literature of the country a larger accession of utility and elegance, and consequently of credit, than the selection made by DOCTOR CHAPMAN from the parliamentary and forensic eloquence of the illustrious orators of Great Britain and Ireland.

It has been, for many years, a subject of deep regret to the learned men of those parts of the world in which the English language is spoken, that of the mass of eloquence which placed the orators of the British islands in an advantageous comparison with the greatest of Greece or Rome, so very little should have been transmitted to the present times. Till the reporting of public debates became a special calling in the hands of men of learning and ingenuity, the speeches of the greatest orators scarcely survived the day of their delivery, and, having served the fugitive purpose of the argument to which they were applied, were for ever lost to the world—in no degree known to any but those who heard them, and by those even forgotten in a few days, and buried in the general miscellany of thought and action. Hence it is that, while we hear their cotemporaries speak in wonder and enthusiastic rapture of the powers of a Flood, a Burgh, a Hutchinson, and, above all, of Anthony Malone, we can scarcely find a relic of the speeches of these great men sufficient to impart the remotest idea of what their style of eloquence was. Of the last of them there is not a vestige left, while the evidence of his superiority to all other men is so complete as to supersede every doubt upon the subject. What Betterton in his day, and Garrick since, were in acting, Malone

was in oratory: for, when an orator, in England or Ireland, was said to be best, it was still understood to be with the exception of Malone: * like those great actors, too, his genius has left no mark behind it.

Passion's wild break, and frown that awes the sense,
And all the charms of gentle eloquence,
All perishable!—like the electric fire,
But strike the frame, and, as they strike, expire!
Incense too pure a bodied flame to bear;
Its fragrance charms the sense, and blends with air.

It is indeed to be lamented that Ireland, to which envy itself is compelled to allow the palm of eloquence, has been still more negligent than her sister island in preserving the speeches of her orators. Had Burke or Sheridan wasted their eloquence at home, posterity would never be able to form a conception of those wonderful specimens of eloquence on which, in future ages, they will rapturously dwell in the compilation of Dr. Chapman.

Since debate-reporting became a trade, every speech of the smallest consequence, whether at the bar or in the senate, has had its fair chance of transmission to posterity. In its first and most imperfect state, it is presented to the public in a newspaper, where all ranks peruse and judge of it. If it possess not intrinsic merit to recommend it on its own account, when the subject on which it was spoken ceases to agitate the feelings and warp the opinions of the public, it is consigned "to the monument of the Capulets;" but if it does, it is printed in a correct and perfect state, and with the authority and consent, perhaps with the corrections too, of the speaker, is given to the public in the form of a pamphlet.

Thus rescued from immediate oblivion, its preservation would still be rendered uncertain, by the diminutiveness of its size and the little importance annexed to such books, if it were left to shift for itself in the fugitive shape of a pamphlet. Hence it has too often happened that some of the most precious remains of eloquence that ever were published, after having had their day of admiration, are now lost, or overlooked, or perhaps exist only in the closet of some bookish churl, who thinks that its value would be lost if others were allowed to participate in it.

The plan of Dr. Chapman is a complete and satisfactory remedy for these evils: and the most splendid monuments of human genius.

* So said lords Hardwicke, Mansfield, and Camden.

of which any age or country could ever boast, are in his "Select Speeches" provided for the delight and improvement of posterity, wrought by him into a shape which bids defiance to the outrages of accident or time.

With these impressions fresh on our mind, we hasten to congratulate this country while we announce that Dr. Chapman has now ready for the press a series of AMERICAN SPEECHES, preserved in the same way, and, we dare to say, selected and executed with no less ability. In this respect America will have a considerable advantage over the old countries: for here, the practice of reporting has been coeval with the practice of public speaking, so that few speeches of any consequence have been entirely lost; yet as the shape in which they have been transmitted is rather precarious, a form of greater bulk and importance is necessary to secure to them permanence, and place them beyond the reach of accident or oblivion.

A publication of that kind being confessedly of the first national importance, it must impart satisfaction to every thinking American to hear that the execution of it has fallen into the hands of a person in all respects so well qualified for such an undertaking. If to perpetuate the eloquence of America, and to transmit the most correct and noble domestic models for the instruction and imitation of the rising genius of the country be a desirable object, what man can be more able to accomplish it than a native American, of approved genius—bred a scholar—trained even from his boyish days to range in classic ground, and from natural taste, as well as education, an enthusiastic lover of eloquence? In the prefatory remarks to each speech in the selection already published, it is easy to perceive that the author has not contented himself with a barren admiration of the eloquence of others, but is himself no common proficient in that enchanting science. Nor need we go farther for a proof of this assertion than a piece which now lies open before us, and which, merely because accident has thrown it first in our way, we extract for the beauty of the writing, although there are some points of opinion in it from which we must for ever cordially dissent.

PREFATORY REMARKS OF DR. CHAPMAN TO MR. PITT'S SPEECH ON THE UNION.

"Notwithstanding what has been urged to the contrary, it will not be difficult to show that the administration of William Pitt was eminently distinguished by the maxims of an enlarged wis-

dom, and of the most liberal, enlightened, and beneficial policy. There entered into its views nothing sordid, or low, or vulgar, or wily, or diminutive. The traits of his political conduct partook conspicuously of the expansiveness of his mind, and the generosity and elevation of his nature. The proofs of this position may be displayed in a brief summary of the leading measures of his political life.

William Pitt was the honest, and faithful, and zealous advocate of parliamentary reform so long as prudence warranted it.

He corrected the abuses, mitigated the violence, and restrained the injustice of the India government.

He constantly opposed, with all his weight and authority, the slave trade.

He resisted the dangerous and unconstitutional principles which were advanced in the memorable discussion concerning the regency.

He cooperated* to settle by a declaratory statute, in a way the most favourable to the rights of the subject, and against the sentiments of the highest legal characters, the important doctrine of libel.

He established, with different countries, treaties of commercial intercourse as liberal, as they were reciprocally advantageous.

He took steps to guarantee the balance of power, and to preserve the peace of Europe, which were acknowledged to be dignified, wise, and magnanimous.

He acquiesced in several concessions to the catholics of Ireland, and was known to be disposed entirely to relieve them of their restrictions and disabilities.

He succeeded ultimately, by the most consummate management, in effecting a union between the sister isles, thus strengthening, by knitting together, the detached members of the empire.

While the surrounding states were torn asunder, and demolished by the hand of conquest, or the ebullition of a poisonous influence, and all Europe was menaced by calamity and ruin, he not only protected his country against this array of terror, but pushed her on by a steady and vigorous impulse in a rapid course of unexampled prosperity and improvement.

Dark, and sinister, and inauspicious as this season was, he

* With Mr. Fox, the originator of the law.

"meliorated her finances; he extended her trade; he increased her
"manufactures; he promoted her agriculture; he multiplied her
"naval and military means; and taught her the salutary lesson, that
"she had wealth, and spirit, and power to combat, as long as she
"proved true to herself, the aggregated and invenomed hostility of
"the world.

"Much as was accomplished by this exalted and efficient minister, it is presumable that had he been cast on times less
"untoward and disjointed, he would have done still more for
"his country.

"From the conviction of reason, perhaps biassed in some degree
"by the general habitudes of his political thinking, and the force
"of inherited prejudice, it is probable he would have directed his
"attention to prune away the defects of original construction, as
"well as those corruptions which have since been introduced into
"the British constitution; thus rendering it as just, and perfect, in
"its theoretical proportions, as it is acknowledged to be excellent
"in its practical operations.

"To us, indeed, it would not be easy to select a statesman whom
"history has recorded, that effected so much for his country, or
"who lays claim to so large a share of the admiration and gratitude
"of posterity."

ANECDOTE OF GARRICK.

It is remarked, that if you deprive a wit of applause, you knock him up for the night. Garrick was an instance of this: he was once invited, as a wit, to be the fiddle of the company, and for some time amused them highly by playing off his wit on a respectable clergyman in company. Garrick very familiarly slapped him on the shoulder; the clergyman looked at him very coolly, and said "Sir, I don't know what you mean by treating me in this manner; I never offended you, nay, I never saw you but once before, and *then* I paid five shillings for it." This so confounded Roscius, and the laugh went so completely against him, that he could scarcely open his lips for the remainder of the evening.

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

KING LEAR,—AND Mr. COOKE IN THAT CHARACTER.

THE tragedy of King Lear has been considered as of all theatrical productions the greatest favourite of nature—and the representation of the old monarch the boldest undertaking it is possible for an actor to hazard. A celebrated foreigner, astonished at the performance of Lear by Garrick, was tempted to investigate the whole play. His analysis of it has been for many years before the public, but, we rather suspect, is now out of print. It is a long time since we read it; but the impression it made was too deep ever to be effaced. To speak generally, that candid and intelligent foreigner held the character of King Lear to be the very first production of the human mind, and after telling why, he speaks to his correspondent to the following effect:—(we do not pretend to answer for the words, but the substantial meaning was this)—“ You will agree with me, that the tragedy I have thus described is the first dramatic production of nature: but you will say ‘ *where can an actor be found to perform the character of Lear?* ’—How will you be astonished then, when I affirm that it is performed here by a person of the name of Garrick, whose representation would almost persuade one to imagine that the power of the poet is even exceeded by that of the actor.”

In his observations on this tragedy, Doctor Johnson scarcely falls short of the foreigner alluded to. “ There is no play,” says he, “ which so much agitates our passions, and interests our curiosity. “ The artful involutions of distinct interests—the striking opposition of contrary character—the sudden changes of fortune—and “ the quick succession of events,—fill the mind with a perpetual “ tumult of indignation, pity, and hope. There is no scene which “ does not contribute to the aggravation of the distress or conduct “ of the action, and scarce a line which does not conduce to the “ progress of the scene. So powerful is the current of the poet’s

"imagination, that the mind, which once ventures within it, is
"hurried irresistibly along."

Of the play of *King Lear*, as written by Shakspeare, in truth too much cannot possibly be said. The same praise, however, cannot be extended to the barbarous mutilations of it exhibited on our modern stages. The most paltry scribblers, the most barbarous literary empirics, though dull as the fat weed that rots on Lethe's banks, have self-possession enough to think they can improve the greatest of all dramatic poets, by alterations which serve only to despoil him of his beauties, to gratify their own exorbitant vanity, and to deceive and pervert the taste of the public. This itch for alteration has been carried to a blamable extent in a variety of plays. That those of Massinger, Wycherly, and other writers, could not be performed in our days without alterations is too true: but in pruning them of their licentious passages, more taste and judgment in dramatic writing are requisite than fall to the share of one in a hundred of those self-erected reformers. But it is the praise of Shakspeare, that he and Ben Jonson are the only dramatic writers of that time who have not shamefully deformed their works with obscenity: and yet of all writers Shakspeare is the one who has suffered most from pretended reformers. They are but few who can form a conception of the havoc made and daily making in his works, of which not one acting play has escaped some sort of mutilation.

Nothing can be a stronger proof of the shallow vanity of man than this, that when seized with the itch of alteration, he always makes choice for his cobbling work of that subject which he thinks most excellent. Thus the most ruthless alterers of our great bard have been some of his greatest admirers—as if they liked him so well, that they wished to become partners with him in his fame. Dryden, who was an enthusiastic admirer of Shakspeare, and was, we believe, the first that justly appreciated his merits, was also the first who set the example of mutilating his works, and patching them up with balderdash of his own. "Shakspeare," says he, in his dialogue on dramatic poetry, "was the man who, of all modern, "and perhaps of all ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, "and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily: when he describes "any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too." Yet this high opinion was entirely overwhelmed by either the vanity or the necessities, or both, of Dryden, who immediately afterwards fell merci-

lessly upon one of our poet's most delightful, Heaven-inspired productions, *The Tempest*; which he altered into one of the most disgusting pieces of mummery that ever was represented on a stage. Yet this stuff held possession of the stage till Garrick, one of vanity's spoiled children, by way of turning this old reheated pie into a new pasty, converted the whole into an opera. An act for which his admiring biographer, Murphy, gives him a little gentle castigation. "Garrick," says Murphy, "ought not to have suffered such a play to dwindle into an opera. The harmony of the versification wanted no aid from music. He had said in a former prologue, that *he wished to lose no drop of that immortal man*, and here he lost a tun of him. Had he revived the *Tempest* as it stands in the original, and played the part of Prospero, he would have done justice to the god of his idolatry, and honour to himself."—The doing of that act of justice to Shakspeare, and honour to himself, however, was reserved for Mossop, whose performance of Prospero we never think of without recollections which give us pain for the past, and render us hopeless of the future.

As we intend, on some future occasion, to enter largely into the general subject of these abuses of Shakspeare, we shall at present carry it no farther than as it relates to the tragedy now before us, which has undergone the most cruel maiming and defacing from the hands, first of Mr. Nahum Tate, then of Mr. George Colman, and, in humble imitation of these, from the still more sacrilegious hands of all the managers and prompters in Great Britain, as it suited their convenience or as it squared with their interest, or their more sordid taste.

We are the more inclined to be full and explicit upon this subject because the alterations of *Lear* have, as Lansdowne's Merchant of Venice once did, got possession of the stage to the exclusion of Shakspeare's much better original work—and because in an old critical work, which is too often taken for conclusive authority, we mean the British Dramatic Censor, these alterations are spoken of with approbation. Nor have we the least apprehension of incurring a retort of the charge of vanity upon us for holding this opinion, when we can show that we are supported in it by the authority of Mr. Addison, who blames Tate for his alteration and declares that it has deprived the tragedy of half its beauty.

It is no justification of altering a play of Shakspeare's to say that it is rendered thereby more pleasing to a majority of the au-

dience. The poet has rights of which no one should be allowed the privilege of depriving him: he has a right to speak for himself—to have the production of his mind given to the world such as it is—and not to have fathered upon his muse the squalid brats of feeble Grub-street brains, littered in garrets or cellars. We remember a case in point, which occurred in our presence. A low comedian of the name of Jackson, who played for some time in Dublin, was in the habit of introducing into the character of Jerry Sneak, in Foote's farce of *The Mayor of Garrat*, a droll song called "Johnny Pringle's Pig."—Whenever he played Jerry he sung this song; and as sure as he sung it, so sure was he to be encored. Foote arrived in Dublin; and the first night the *Mayor of Garrat* was performed by him, Johnny Pringle's pig being encored, Foote threw out a jibe upon the song, and, of course, upon the taste of the audience—they resented it; upon which the wit, who knew better than any man in the house the ground on which he stood, boldly stepped forward, asserted his right as an author to reject interpolations,—maintained that right respectfully but firmly,—laid down the law in support of authors, and was, as he deserved to be, highly applauded,—and succeeded in having Johnny Pringle's pig exiled to its proper sty, so long at least as he remained in Dublin.

Were those alterations an improvement even, we deny their admissibility;—but as they greatly injure the play, they ought not to be endured. Where an excellent play happens to be, here and there, defaced with obscenity, the offensive parts ought to be expunged, or the piece withheld from representation: but against the introduction of any matter not belonging to the author, against any material defalcation, or any addition at all, and against the slightest change in the arrangement of the scenes, justice, common sense, criticism, taste and sound judgment will for ever set their faces. Thus we would not insist upon retaining the opening scene of *Lear*, because in it Gloster informs Kent of the illegitimacy of his son Edmund, in terms too coarse for female delicacy to hear: but we see no reason for dislocating the play by bringing Edmund himself forward to relate it in this place, which he might as well be left to do in that appointed by Shakspeare—that is in the second scene, in a soliloquy which, by the by, is not one atom less coarse than the part expunged. Therefore we would put Mr. Tate aside, pass over Gloster and Kent's conversation, and open the play with King Lear surrounded by his court.

With the hypercriticisms uttered upon this tragedy we have still less patience than with the alterations of Messrs. Tate and Colman. When a hypercritic once gets mounted on his hobby-horse, he seems to think that he has a right to ride over every thing. Instead of taking the character as the poet intended it, and then trying how far the language, the incidents, the sentiments, and the arrangement of the various parts of the scheme be calculated to give force and illustrate that character, they set out with finding fault with the character itself. We remember to have met with one of those hollow talkers, who pertinaciously maintained that Fielding's character of Alworthy ought to have been drawn in some particulars different from what it is—or, in other words, that it ought to be that which the author did not intend it to be: “for, sir,” said this wisehead, “Mr. Alworthy ought not to have treated Jones so hastily, nor “abandoned him upon the suggestions of his enemies.” It was in vain to say to this sagacious critic—Fielding intended to draw Mr. Alworthy—and he has done so—a natural character,—a good man—but not a perfect one. No; it would not do;—and because it did not square with this sage critic's idea, he would insist that Alworthy, one of the finest characters ever imagined by the human fancy, was nothing but a poor unmeaning piece of stuff—a nothing! We have now before us a long and laboured criticism on King Lear, in which the author, who by the way pronounces it the first of all dramatic productions, censures Lear, in many places, for the very things which constitute his extraordinary character; and begins by deriding the notion of Lear's measuring the division of his kingdom among his daughters, by their respective answers to the question, “*which loves us most?*”—Now, when the moral intention of Shakspeare in drawing King Lear is fully and considerably examined, it will appear that every particular point, objected to by the hypercritics, is in reality a beauty not only wonderful in the skilfulness of its application to the general purpose of the play, but absolutely essential to the full illustration of the particular character of old Lear itself.

We have heretofore* said that Shakspeare's main object in the composition of Richard the Third seemed to be “to exhibit in the “strongest colours the unlimited powers of stupendous intellect “when united with stupendous courage.” In King Lear his design

* See page 183.

evidently appears to be this—to point out the danger of excessive sensibility, and to warn us that the indulgence of that benevolent impulse (precious and useful as it is when under correction) is, when unaccompanied by cool reflection, and unguided by a strict sense of duty, the source of incalculable mischiefs to the possessor, liable to extravagance, excess, and outrage; and ultimately leading to the shipwreck of felicity, fortune, and character.

If we were to judge of the feelings of men from their writings, we should be led to believe, by his plays, that sensibility was a misfortune from which Shakspeare had suffered severely: for, master as he is of every passion, we find none on which he has expatiated more frequently, more feelingly, or indeed more effectually. Without adverting to many other proofs of this, we will barely mention the characters of *HAMLET*, *JAQUES*, in *As you like it*, and *TIMON*, besides this of *LEAR*; in each of which we find the unhappy effects of extreme sensibility depicted, though in different shapes, in such warm language and glowing colours as nothing but a heart that acutely felt it could supply. Instructed by nature in all the diversities of the human passions, conversant in all the infirmities they produce, and skilful in discriminating their various symptoms, Shakspeare knew that they frequently produce effects apparently the most incongruous,—that the same passion frequently shows itself in the same person with the most discordant and contrary indications, and that sensibility, the most kindly and beneficent of the social impulses, if repulsed from its object, is apt to recoil to an opposite and a vitious extreme.

Lear, accustomed to authority, and to the most flattering and servile submission to his will, had never experienced any of those checks which would serve to diminish the influence of the passions over ordinary men. Having complexionally a strong sensibility, he has all his life had the means of indulging it without fear of evil consequences, or check from inconvenience. Kingly opulence enabled him to be munificent without danger—kingly authority exempted him from responsibility to any one. Thus his natural sensibility, nourished by long enjoyment, and inflamed by the flattery of those who profited by it, grew every day more dominant over his reason, till at last its dominion became perfect, while the latter, debilitated by age, and pride, and fondness, dwindled away and left him a prey to all his wayward feelings. Still he was a king,—still he had power and authority;—and so long as these re-

mained, he was safe from the worst effects of his infirmities. He might be privately smiled at for his weakness—but he could not be openly derided—he could not be trampled upon—he could not be utterly undone. Such is his condition at the opening of the tragedy; Shakspeare judiciously making his appearance in the play commence with that first act of superlative folly which strips him of his authority and leads to his undoing.

It is the nature of extreme sensibility so far to transform its victims from the ordinary mould of men of this world that they never fail to ascribe their own dispositions to those whom they regard, and to expect from them correspondent feelings and affections. They never dream of—nay, they will not believe it possible that any difference of mind could exist between them. On this ground we find old Lear so confident in the affections of his beloved daughters, and most of all in his youngest whom most he loves, that he resolves to give up every thing to them, and to become in his turn dependent on their affections. This naturally leads him to the question which of them loves him most; in their answers to which he makes sure, by a reference to his own heart, of the fondest from her of whom he is most fond. Childish as this may appear to hasty critics, it is nevertheless founded in an accurate observance of human nature.

Now, our joy,
Although the last, not least; to whose young love
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
Strive to be interest'd; what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

All the lecturers on morality in the world could not give, in the most elaborate details, a more copious view of the debilitating effects of sensibility than Shakspeare has in this one scene. As it is the nature of sensitive persons to transfer their own dispositions to those they love, and to expect a full reciprocation of them, it is their nature too, as a matter of consequence, to feel the most poignant anguish if their own extravagant and unreasonable ardour is not suitably returned; and this pain is violent in proportion to the excess of their expectations and the magnitude of their disappointment.—In conformity to this doctrine, our great poet raises the resentment, the disappointment, and the pain of Lear to an excessive degree of poignancy and exasperation; and on his hearing the ungracious answer of Cordelia, which is so

entirely the reverse of what he expected, that, sensitive and hasty as he is, he can scarcely bring himself to believe it till it is repeatedly confirmed by her reiterated avowal. Then he breaks forth like a volcano, and, yielding to the impulse of his rage, disclaims all future connexion with her.

By the sacred radiance of the sun,
The mysteries of Hecate and the night;
By all the operations of the orbs,
From whom we do exist, and cease to be;
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
Propinquity and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart and me
Hold thee from this, for ever.

Still, like the reflux of the sea, the excessive fondness which engendered this anger rolls back upon his heart for a moment; but only to render his fury the more ungovernable:

I lov'd her most, and thought to set my rest
On her kind nursery.—Hence, and avoid my sight!
So be my grave my peace, as here I give
Her father's heart from her!
● Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.

As one of the strongest arguments used in favour of Tate's alteration is, that a person so entirely faultless as Cordelia ought not to suffer, (a notion directly contradictory to the best received opinions respecting the privileges of tragedy) the character of Cordelia is, for the very purpose of the argument, greatly exaggerated. Now the truth is, that the answer of Cordelia, considering the august relations of the person to whom she speaks, his age and his infirmities, is coarse—blunt if you will—sincere too, if a rough avowal of disagreeable truth, without any adequate cause, be sincerity—but in her circumstances rough, saucy, churlish, undutiful, and blamable, because useless, unfounded, and unnecessary. Shakspeare, whose justice those self-fond critics impeach for the destiny he allots to Cordelia, has given her firm virtue enough to make the death to which he brings her lamented; but yet he has made her not so faultless as to be an unfit object for the sad catastrophe, to which the tragic muse delights to bring the virtuous as well as the wicked. Not only she chops logic, and with cold-blooded cynical bluntness, palters with the foolish fondness of the most tender of fathers, in a moment of the most extreme sensibi-

lity, but resolutely refuses to indulge him with an avowal of her love for him, which, if she did not even feel, it would have been virtue in her to affect: on the contrary, though she sees him agitated at her answer, she persists in it with stubborn, churlish pertinacity. Let it be remembered also, that to this her unpardonable obstinacy the misfortunes of her father, herself and her family are in a considerable degree to be ascribed. Away with that miserable casuistry, falsely called criticism, in which the wayward self-willed mind, more intent to plume itself on nice intellectual discriminations than to investigate the human passions and feelings, rejects the counsels of the heart, and listens only to the miserable dogmas of a brain perverted perhaps by ill directed study, or corrupted by metaphysics!—The judgment that takes its impulse from the united streams of a clear head, and a pure and feeling heart, will join with us in thinking that a dutiful and deserving daughter would have acted very differently from Cordelia—even by a pious deception poured balm into his aged heart, and

On the last verge of life, watch ev'ry look,
Explore each fond, unutterable wish,
And smooth the pillow of declining age.

That Shakspeare intended to fix a slight stain upon Cordelia is certain; and it is no less obvious that he meant that this excellent moral lesson should be deduced from it—that to sport with, to exasperate, or to injure the feelings of parents, when it is in our power to assuage and give them happiness, deserves and brings down sooner or later a heavy judgment on the offender.—Mr. Colman, in his alteration, seems to have had no conception of this: for though, like Mr. Tate, he resolved to frustrate Shakspeare's purpose, he retains the offensive speeches of Cordelia; while Tate, who saw that the one rather militated against the other, and evidently perceived the drift of the great author, softens the language of Cordelia, out of compliment to his own plan of making her happy in the end, contrary to Shakspeare's appointment.

Let us be distinctly understood. When we blame the churlishness of Cordelia to her kind old father, it is not as a dramatic but as a moral character; and that which is a flaw in her as one, is a perfection in her as the other: for in this lies the error of too many critics—they confound the two kinds of characters, which are, in truth, perfectly distinct. He that draws a picture of man, if

he pretend to make it a resemblance, must give it man's vices and infirmities, as well as his virtues and beauties, and exhibit both in the various degrees of intermixture in which they are found in life. So Shakspeare has done; and in such sort, too, that he who attempts to alter or censure his general drawings, proves himself "most egregiously an ass."—Thus for the general purpose of his play, Shakspeare has made Cordelia faulty, in her flippant obstinacy to her father; but has made her a mere woman in her feelings towards her sisters—against whom she lets loose her jealousy, even before there is any reason to imagine them recreant; showing thereby that her uncourteous words to her father, arose from a design to throw their professions of love into disadvantageous contrast with her own sincerity, rather than from any substantial valuable object she could have in view.

I yet beseech your majesty
 (If, for I want that *glib and oily art*
To speak and purpose not; since what I well intend,
 I'll do't before I speak) that you may know
 It is no vitious blot, murder or foulness,
 No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,
 That hath depriv'd me of your grace and favour:
 A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
 That I am glad I have not—though not to have it
 Hath lost me your liking.

Now, if Shakspeare meant all these insinuations and innuendoes, and her sturdy defiance of her father, for any other thing but to mark Cordelia's rooted jealousy and hatred of her sisters, who have not yet unfolded their baseness, he knew nothing of the movements of the heart, nor of the import of language. But to put it out of doubt at once, when France says to her "bid farewell to your sisters," the words our poet puts into Cordelia's mouth prove what we assert: addressing herself to her sisters, (who, we repeat it, have not yet proved recreant) she addresses them in very provoking terms,

The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes,
 Cordelia leaves you:—*I know what you are.*

From these ebullitions of jealousy and dislike in Cordelia who, after all, is angelic compared with her sisters, it is evident that the poet intended to show that the unhappy want of system, occasioned by the blind fondness and sensibility of old Lear, had early deposited in his family the seeds of animosity, selfishness, and mutual

jealousy; and that, however it might be concealed from the old king's observation, the goddess of discord had bowled her golden apple among them—for the sturdiness of Cordelia is chiefly aimed at her sisters. All are, therefore, in some degree, reprehensible—some extremely bad;—Cordelia has the advantage of appearing very amiable only by being contrasted with those monsters, her sisters,—and of redeeming herself by after acts of filial piety to her poor old father—administered however too late to effectuate any good purpose.

It has been the habit of critics, too, to rail at the poor old king. According to them, he is rash, cruel, capricious, inconstant, irresolute, and inordinately vindictive: but the reader, who follows him through the tragedy, will find that, in every part of his conduct, he acts in a manner conformable to the general nature of man when exposed to the same untoward circumstances; and that, if he were other than the poet has made him, he would be less natural, and therefore inferior as a dramatic personage. Here, indeed, the critic's theory is at variance with the universal feeling;—for we verily believe that, from the outset of the play to the end of it, Lear is to every heart an object of unqualified regard, and of a compassion almost filial. That person, male or female, who does not feel for the old monarch something analogous to the tenderness and sorrow of a child, and the most violent indignation and horror of his enemies, must be destitute of sympathy, and devoid of every laudable sentiment. All his errors spring from amiable qualities carried to excess,—his imprudence from overweening parental affection, misplaced generosity and unsuspecting confidence;—his apparent vindictiveness, from ill requited love and the base ingratitude of those to whom he gave his all;—his rashness from the incapacity of infirmity and extreme age to struggle with feelings and to endure wrongs, such as would be an overmatch for firm men in the vigorous bloom of manhood, and might indeed have ruffled stoicism itself. On the other hand, he discloses the most benevolent dispositions, unmixed with selfishness or deceit. Though furious, his anger is sudden, spontaneous, unpremeditated, and untainted with malice or ill nature; and his worst faults, far from being of a criminal dye, are the offspring of innocence and simplicity. As if intent upon collecting his whole might into one great effort to storm the heart and to display his unlimited mastery over our feelings, Shakspeare has summed up in Lear every circumstance

that can excite our interest for his welfare, and wring the heart with the most painful sympathies. He has not only made him very old and burdened him with the feebleness and infirmities annexed to age, but made him announce it himself:

'Tis our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from *our age*;
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburden'd *crawl toward death*;—

and again in the seventh scene of the fourth act,

Pray do not mock me:
I am a very *foolish, fond old man*,
Fourscore and upwards,—

and, to finish the portrait, he has made him the victim of his own kindness to ungrateful, undutiful, and unnatural children. Here is a picture to which as there never yet was, so it is very probable that time itself will never find a fellow.

The same sensibility which kindles his wrath against Cordelia, renders him impatient of opposition, and indignant at the generous interposition and blunt advice of the honest old Kent, whose language, though rather rough to be offered to his sovereign, extorts our approbation by its truth and boldness, and delights every good heart by its hazardous sincerity.

Kent. Royal Lear,
Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,
Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd—

Lear. The bow is bent and drawn, make firm the shaft.

Kent. Let it fall rather, though the fork invade
The region of my heart: be Kent unmannerly
When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old man?
Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak
When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour-bound
When majesty stoops to folly. Reverse thy doom;
And, in thy best consideration, check
This hideous business: answer my life, my judgment,
Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least;
Nor are those empty hearted whose low sound
Reverbs no hollowness.—Revoke thy gift,
Or, while I can vent clamour from my throat,
I'll tell thee thou dost evil.

This is noble—this is natural; and while it unfolds the character of KENT, forms a cause for his dismissal from the king's service, and

enables the poet, without any breach of order or probability, to introduce him soon after in the interesting disguise of the old serving man CAIUS. It is worthy of observation that Shakspeare seldomer than any other poet takes aim at a single object—and that very often a sentence, or even a single line of his, will convey two distinct ideas, sometimes even more. In the ungovernable anger of Lear, still further inflamed by the interference and censure of Kent, an ordinary poet would have thought that the least Lear should do, being prevented from putting him to death with his own sword on the spot, would be to order him to instant execution; but Shakspeare has further use for Kent, and not only resolves that he shall live, but makes the very punishment ordained him, instrumental to a further illustration of the character of the old king. Across the whirlwind of Lear's rage therefore there breaks a flash of recollection of Kent's former fidelity and services—a throb of remaining regard, which pleads in his behalf; and the king contents himself with banishing him.

Five days we do allot thee for provision
To shield thee from disaster of the world,
And on the sixth to turn thy hated back
Upon our kingdom. If on the tenth day following,
Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,
That moment is thy death.

Having dismissed Kent, Lear then turns to Burgundy, and, carrying his indignation to a degree of vindictiveness, for which we cannot help making allowance, considering the inflamed state of his temper, and the infirm unsettled condition of his mind, and which cannot be deemed unnatural, since the experiment of every passing year furnishes so many instances of the kind even in inferior life, he tells that prince, who has been Cordelia's suiter, that he may have her, provided he will take her without any other dowry than his abhorrence:

Now her price is fallen: sir, there she stands;
If aught within that little seeming substance,
Or all of it, with our displeasure pierc'd,
And nothing more may fitly like your grace,
She's there, and she is yours.—
Will you, with those infirmities she owes,
Unfriended, new adopted to our hate,
Dower'd with our curse and stranger'd with our oath,
Take her, or leave her?

(To be continued.)

THE following letter, received per New York, appears to the editor of the Mirror to be of too *imperative* a nature to be postponed to another number: our observations on King Lear are therefore cut short for the purpose of giving it a place in this.

MR. EDITOR,

A friend to your Dramatic Censor makes bold to address you upon the merits of that work, and hopes that his advice may have some weight. To the work in question, he has been a subscriber from its commencement; and upon that consideration, he considers it a right, which he holds in common with others, to offer any remarks he may think proper, provided they do not interfere with the private character of the editor.

The first subject we shall notice is a communication signed "Gum," which appeared in a former volume of the work in question; in which the writer displays a total ignorance of the characters which he attempts to delineate. To none of *our* performers does he attach any credit. Simpson, who is a *far greater favourite with us, than Wood is with you*, he says is not above mediocrity; Mrs. Mason, a *better actress than whom never trod the American boards*, is almost passed over in silence! and Twaits—yes Twaits, the darling of the American people, is spoken of as but a trifling actor. This, sir, is not the way to obtain the patronage of the citizens of the *United States*. If you mean your work for the Philadelphians, it is well; but if you expect *general* support—give *general* satisfaction. If you can give *our city* no biographical sketches of its performers, I pray you, do not suffer your correspondents to hurl their malice at them; rather let them sleep in silence, than make them noted only by slander.

Of the Boston and Charleston performers you say *nothing*: and, if I mistake not, it was one of the conditions of the work, to give criticisms upon the *American* stage (not the *Philadelphian only*). I have said sufficient; and what I have said, has not been for myself alone, but for *others* who have patronized your work. If there is no other redress, then they must unwillingly withdraw that support, which by giving, they hoped to create a work, which might be both a pleasure to themselves, and an honour to their country.

New-York, June 1811.

WESTON.

P.S. *I can hardly hope that you will have the candour to publish the above.* If you will (and any remarks you may think proper to add) I shall consider myself greatly OBLIGATED to you. W.

The promptitude with which we have given a place to the above letter, must convince the writer that we have no desire to withhold it from the public eye. Why WESTON should call in question our having candour enough to publish it, we are not at all solicitous to know; nor shall we take the trouble to inquire: we may be permitted, however, to compliment that gentleman upon the singular liberality of his suggestion: with candour of that kind, such suspicions as his are very naturally associated. After such an insinuation, who could have blamed us, if we had treated the communication with neglect? Indeed we should have done so, were it not that, instead of shrinking from the subject, we are glad of an occasion to bring it before the public.

To Weston's charge the answer is short and easy. At an early period of this work, the then proprietor of it, being on business at New-York, applied to a person there, in whose judgment he thought he could confide, to furnish the Mirror with occasional communications touching the theatre of that city. With the engagement, whatever it was, the EDITOR of the Mirror had no privity—he barely understood who the person employed was; and he had reason to believe him capable of the office. Soon afterwards, the communication signed GLUM (not Gum) was by the proprietor handed over, most probably without being read, to the editor, with other papers, for insertion, and was by the latter immediately put into the printer's hands.

At this distance of time, the editor has but an obscure recollection what the precise impression made upon him by that communication was; but from a review of the piece, taken since the arrival of Weston's letter, he is sure it could not have been favourable; and he remembers very well having united with Mr. Inskeep, of New-York, (who soon after its appearance came on a visit to Philadelphia) in censuring it, and lamenting its having been published. The editor of the Mirror is persuaded that he either did not peruse, or but very slightly glanced at, the writing, before it was printed: for had he noticed the tendency of *some of its parts*, he would have taken the freedom to state his opinion of it to the proprietor.—To have altered or rejected it himself, had he noticed it, would have been inadmissible, indelicate, and a violation of the etiquette which ought to subsist among writers.

Weston, however, must not infer from this, that the parts of Glum's observations, which have offended him, are those which

the editor would have thought reprehensible. From the nature of his office, the New-York critic was intitled to that confidence without which it would be fruitless to employ him; and it would be preposterous to suspect such a one of any hostile intentions to actors just arrived, for the first time, in the country: nor would it be less preposterous in the editor of the *Mirror* to call in question the correctness of Glum's observations on Mr. Simpson, Mrs. Mason, or Mr. Twaits, since he not only had never seen, but to this very moment has never set his eyes upon either of the two former; and since, of Mr. Twaits he never saw enough *on the stage* to enable him to form an adequate judgment of his professional talents. The editor has as yet seen that gentleman in but two characters. In one of those he greatly admired him; but that was low comedy—and in low comedy Glum has praised Mr. Twaits.

Of the really censurable part of the production, however, Weston says nothing. This, coupled with his laying such extraordinary stress on the other parts of it, which being a mere matter of opinion on actors, are certainly defensible, looks as if Weston had some particular cause for soreness on that point which the editor of the *Mirror* cannot possibly feel. Unnecessary comparisons between existing persons are never instituted but for bad purposes, and generally arise more from malice to the person lowered, than good will to him that is raised. Glum's injurious comparison between the managers of the New-York and Philadelphia theatre therefore has always had, and ever must have, our unequivocal disapprobation. Indeed so much, that, while free from any wilful concern in it, we should be glad to have it entirely expunged from the work.—But why has Weston overlooked that part?—His silence on it, and his at the same time fastening so angrily upon the wrongs supposed by him to be done to his favourite performers, is rather curious:—it reminds us of the story told in a curious old romance, of a giant who gulped down windmills with ease, but was afterwards choked in attempting to swallow a bit of butter, at the mouth of a hot oven.

Without following the example of Weston by glancing at a comparison between Mr. Simpson and Mr. Wood, we will say (and sincerely we do say it) that it gives us unfeigned pleasure to hear that the former is a favourite at New-York: it costs us no effort of faith to believe that he is deserving of it: we have, indeed, heard him spoken of by Mr. Wood with that liberal applause with which it becomes one gentleman to speak of another. But if Mr. Simpson

be indeed even as great a favourite in New-York, and on the same grounds, as Mr. Wood is in Philadelphia, his situation is truly enviable.

Could the editor of the Mirror but accomplish the brilliant *sapientia repetita* hypothesis of lawyer Dowling, in Tom Jones, and cut himself into four quarters, he would take care to be at one and the same time in Philadelphia, Baltimore, New-York and Boston; but since that kind of ubiquity is denied him, he must either go without any stage intelligence from those places, or take what he can procure "with all its imperfections on its head." To establish correspondents for the purpose has been an object of the proprietor's earnest solicitude; and, though as yet unsuccessful, he does not despair of speedily accomplishing it. But the election of a correspondent being once made, his criticism must be confided in, and appear unaltered in the work. In that case, the editor does not vouch for the orthodoxy of his opinion—he only gives it as the best he can get. For nothing in all empiricism can be imagined more arrogant or absurd than for an editor, who has not seen a performance, to censure the critique upon it of a correspondent who has; and such would have been our conduct (having never seen Mr. Simpson or Mrs. Mason) had we impeached the criticism of GLUM.

In cases of distant correspondents, the public, though they should dissent from the criticism, take no offence at the editor, because they know he is not reprehensible for the opinions of others:—were it not so, what an old house should he not now pull about his head by publishing Weston's encomium on Mrs. Mason, among a people who still remember that Mrs. WARREN once trod the American boards. If Weston will take the pains to look over the Monthly Mirror of London, he will find that the opinions of its country correspondents are frequently at variance with that of its city editors.—In the case of Cooke, there is a striking instance of this, where they publish a correspondent's dispraise of that actor, and declare at the same time, that they retain an opposite opinion in his favour.

Should the difficulty of procuring correspondents by epistolary application continue to be insuperable, the proprietor, or an agent for him, will go to the several cities in person for the purpose.—It is our interest to please all our subscribers if possible; and, whatever Weston may think to the contrary, it is sincerely our inclination also.

. K. is received, and shall be published.

MIRROR OF TASTE

AND

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

FOR THE YEAR 1811.

The property of this Work being transferred from Messrs. Bradford and Inskip to Thomas Barton Zantzinger and Co. the first Number of the year 1811 (January) will be published at the store of the said Thomas Barton Zantzinger and Co. Shakspeare Buildings, South Sixth, near Chesnut street.

THE CONDUCTORS OF THE MIRROR OF TASTE TO THE PUBLIC.

ON the commencement of a new year, something prefatory is expected from the editors of periodical publications: long established custom sanctions the expectation; and we reverence the laws of prescription too much to violate them, even in cases of inferior consequence. Entering on the second year of this work, therefore, we think it incumbent on us to say a few words in that way, not only to offer the customary compliments to our friends, but to inform them that **THE MIRROR** now comes into the world under new auspices, and with means which embolden us to affirm, that the management of the work in the ensuing year shall fully compensate for its deficiencies in the last.

Retrospectively, we have much to lament, but nothing to be ashamed of. It may be said, that we have failed in redeeming some of the pledges given in our original prospectus: and this charge is certainly true; but we can also state with truth, that the delay is to be ascribed solely to circumstances not within the control of the Editor.

PROSPECTUS.

So much for the mechanical and commercial conduct of the work. Of the editorial, we freely confess, that its defects, whatever they may be, are entirely our own: for incorrectness in the language, want of taste in the selection, deficiency of interest in the general matter, or error of judgment in the critical observations, whatever the blame may be, we have no one to share it with us: neither, of the little there may be deserving of praise, can any one lay claim to a share, (our ingenious and respectable correspondent DRAMATICUS excepted); since, besides what came from him, we have not received one page of contribution: a fact which, though true, may appear singular; but which we ascribe to the unostentatious nature, and modest reserve of our literary scribes.

Had we no other difficulties than the want of correspondents, to encounter, we should have no plea to offer in abatement of the rigour of criticism: but many and of various kinds have been the clogs upon our efforts; many the obstacles which could not be foreseen, nor, if foreseen, prevented; inhering, as some of them do, in the nature of the work itself, and the checkered disposition of mankind. "*Quot homines, tot sententiæ*," says the great Roman dramatist; or, in vulgar English phrase, "So many men, so many minds." The human taste is volatile, variable, impatient of control, disloyal to its standard, untrue even to itself, and too often the mere versatile handmaid of a vain and froward will. To please all, therefore, were hopeless; to please many, for a long time, difficult. In criticism, we agnize a scantiness of one quality which others think worth all the rest put together. Men are more inclinable to censure than to praise, and often think that to be wit, which is, in truth, only malice. If we know ourselves, we have never been vain enough to aspire to the one; and we do most cordially abhor the other. Wanting both, our criticisms were disrelished by those who had enough of either one or other to satisfy themselves. Such censors, as we are, cannot please those who open a critical essay, as kind souls go to a public execution, to indulge their sympathies with the butchery of their fellow creatures. Had we flayed alive the players, as very many expected we should have done, disgust would have taken place of pleasure in the audience. Far from being improved, the actors, palsied by reproach, would have sunk under their feelings; and perhaps some, in the agonies of a noble spirit bruised by wanton cruelty, would have shared the fate of

PROSPECTUS.

Fullarton: the interests of the drama require no such sacrifice—they are not worth it—they shall not have it from us.

There were several other disadvantages we had to encounter in our first year: the state of the times was peculiarly unfavourable, in a commercial point of view, to any work of enterprise; the number of periodical publications, which had already established their just claims to public support, dried up or preoccupied many of the sources of patronage; and while, from without, a multitude of circumstances concurred to discourage hope, and depress exertion, domestic calamity fell with a weight, scarcely to be sustained, and for a long time smothered all our energies. In nothing else presuming to claim alliance with the great lexicographer of Britain, we cannot more truly describe the circumstances under which the greater part of *THE MIRROR OF TASTE* was composed, than in the very words which that great and good man uses in the preface to his English Dictionary, to describe the circumstances under which he wrote that work: "*With little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academic bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow.*" With the recollection of so many embarrassments, pressing themselves upon the mind, we cannot help contemplating with wonder, and indeed with something like pride, the station which *THE MIRROR OF TASTE* now holds in public estimation. It is surely something to be able at this time to say, that we can survey our present situation with pleasure, and look forward to the future with more than hope.

In what manner the work *may* be carried on, the part already published has shown. In what manner it *shall* be carried on, is a point on which it might not, perhaps, become us to speak, and on which, therefore, we "refer our readers to the coming on of time." Some slight changes may take place in the arrangement; some material ones will be made in the general management of the work. For a religious observance of all promises, and the most strict punctuality in the publication, we pledge ourselves. The prints shall be judiciously selected, and executed in the best manner, by the best artists in America; and the plays, accompanying the several numbers, shall be printed with a type, and in a form which cannot fail to give perfect satisfaction.

We have nothing to add, but that upon this plain, unvarnished representation of the subject, we feel some confidence of success,

PROSPECTUS.

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